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TRADE UNIONISM ON THE RAILWAYS

TRADE UNIONISM
ON THE
RAILWAYS
ITS HISTORY AND PROBLEMS

BY

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AND

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TRADE UNION
SERIES No. 2

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PREFACE

THIS book was planned and partly written in 1913-1914, immediately after the formation of the National Union of Railwaymen. I have since so thoroughly revised it as to make it in effect a new book. Its publication, originally postponed on account of the war, now seems exceedingly opportune. Trade Unionists in every industry are beginning to look forward to the problems which will confront them after the war; and it is of the greatest importance that they should have before them a clear statement of the past and the present if they are to frame intelligent and coherent plans for the future.

The aim of the book is in no sense that of presenting an official or authoritative policy. The views which it expresses are those of its authors; and throughout the attempt has been made to subordinate views to the clearest possible statement of facts and problems. It is issued in the hope that it will serve to engender light rather than heat; and that it will be of help to railwaymen in dealing with the industrial problems which face them. The organised railway workers have an enviable chance of leading the way for the whole Trade Union movement; and for this they have need to equip themselves with the fullest possible knowledge of their industry and of its organisation.

G. D. H. COLE.

May, 1917.

TRADE UNIONISM ON THE RAILWAYS

CHAPTER I.

Introductory

NOTHING in the Trade Union world is more remarkable than the change which has come over the railwaymen's organisations during the last few years. Beginning only when Unions in many other industries were already growing strong, and remaining thereafter for many years weak, timid and conservative, the railway Unions were, until quite recently, regarded as stagnant. In their "History of Trade Unionism," Mr. and Mrs. Webb described both the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen as Unions of the "Friendly Society" type. The "all grades" movement of 1906-7 was the beginning of the revival of the A.S.R.S. The hasty settlement for which Mr. Lloyd George was acclaimed the saviour of society in 1907, but which the men only accepted because they were conscious of the weakness of their own organisation, worked so badly, and so clearly failed to remedy their grievances, that the spirit of solidarity was awakened. The results were the new movement of 1911, which led to the national railway strike, and the subsequent formation of the National Union of Railwaymen. It is not too much to say that four years' experience of the working of the 1907 conciliation scheme taught the railwaymen far more than decades of agitation could have done. They began to realise the oppression under which they suffered, and to develop a militant industrial policy. It is the purpose of this book to trace the recent history of Trade Unionism on the railways, and to discuss some of the urgent problems which are now confronting it.

It is most convenient to begin with a brief survey of the present position. According to the Board of Trade Report, the total number of persons employed on the railways in 1913, the last complete year before the war period, was 643,135, including 49,047 boys under eighteen. The figures are inclusive of all grades, from

Inspectors and Stationmasters to Cleaners, Messengers and Labourers. The most important classes are the following :—

A.	Inspectors	10,430	
	Stationmasters	8,791	
	Clerks	76,210	(including 12,018 boys)
	Ticket Collectors & Examiners	4,403	
B.	Engine Drivers	29,869	
	Firemen	27,343	
	Engine Cleaners	19,150	(including 5,636 boys)
C.	Goods Guards & Brakesmen	16,588	
	Passenger Guards	8,427	
D.	Signalmen	29,512	(including 2,146 boys)
	Pointsmen	692	
E.	Porters	61,648	(including 4,524 boys)
F.	Mechanics	88,939	(including 8,210 boys)
G.	Permanent-Way Men ...	52,517	
H.	Labourers	73,207	(including 1,648 boys)
I.	Carmen and Vanguards ...	25,509	(including 6,406 boys)
J.	Shunters	15,095	

In 1910, the total membership of the seven Unions then catering exclusively for railway workers was 116,214, or considerably less than one-fifth of the total number employed. In addition, a considerable number of mechanics were organised in various craft Unions, some others being in the railway Unions, and a small number of labourers in the shops was in the general labour Unions. Roughly, then, rather more than one-fifth of the railway employees were organised in 1910.

Since then, a most remarkable change has taken place. There are now in all six purely railway Unions; but three of these are so small as to be negligible. The membership of these six Unions now stands at over 400,000. If we add to this figure the railway workers organised in engineering and general labour Unions, it seems that fully three-quarters of the total number employed are now organised. As a very great proportion of the unorganised are either boys or members of the salariat, it will be seen that the railway service is rapidly becoming blackleg-proof.

As we shall have to discuss the important Unions in detail in the course of this book, a bare list will suffice here, with a very brief indication of the lines of demarcation between them.

First comes the *National Union of Railwaymen,* founded in 1913, as the result of a fusion of the old Amalgamated Society of

Railway Servants, which had 132,002 members at the time of the fusion, the General Railway Workers' Union, which had 20,318, and the United Signalmen and Pointsmen, who had 3,937. At the end of eighteen months' working, the new Union had leapt from a total membership of 156,257 to one of nearly 300,000. The latest available figures show its membership to be 340,131 (December, 1916). It caters for all persons employed on or about railways, and includes a considerable number of craftsmen and labourers in the railway shops and running sheds, but its main strength lies among drivers, firemen, and cleaners, guards, porters, signalmen, and permanent-way men. It does not in practice attempt to organise the greater part of the salariat.

Next comes the *Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen,* which caters for drivers, firemen, and engine-cleaners only. Out of a total of 70,928 employees in these three classes it had 19,800 members in 1910, and 36,000 out of 76,362 at the present. It co-operated with the other Unions in the 1911 strike, but refused to merge its individuality in the N.U.R. Recent railway history is, indeed, bound up with the quarrels between these two Unions.

The third important Union is the *Railway Clerks' Association,* founded in 1897. It takes in agents, stationmasters, and all clerical workers on the railways. In 1910 it had 9,476 members; in 1917 its numbers had risen to 52,000. This rapid advance means that the R.C.A. now speaks for a majority of all the adult clerical workers on the railways; for in 1913 the Railway Companies had in their employment 64,192 men clerks, 12,018 boy clerks, and 8,791 stationmasters, in addition to 3,043 clerks employed by the British and Irish Railway Clearing Houses.

The remaining organisations are unimportant. The *Belfast and Dublin Locomotive Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Trade Union,* founded in 1872 as a Friendly Society and registered as a Trade Union in 1895, had only 413 members in 1912. The *Irish Railway Workers' Trade Union,* founded in 1910, had in 1912, 133 members, mainly, if not entirely, labourers in the shops; it had also a growing deficit, its whole income being swallowed up in working expenses. *The National Union of Railway Clerks,* formed in December, 1913, consists in fact of some of the members of the late Sheffield branch of the R.C.A., which was suspended after a quarrel with the Executive, and the endorsement of the Executive's attitude by a Special Conference of the R.C.A. The membership of the old Sheffield branch was nearly 400, but only a minority of these joined the new Union, which, indeed, seems to regard itself as a merely temporary body. The R.C.A. has founded a new branch in Sheffield, which has now a membership of over 400 in April, 1917. The N.U.R.C., which has no branches outside Sheffield, approached the N.U.R. with a view to

amalgamation, but this project was not accepted by the N.U.R.[1]

So, far then, as the number of Unions is concerned, the railway industry is amongst the simplest. There are only three important Unions, and one of these caters for a clearly distinct class of workers. We shall have to deal later on with the actual and possible relation of the R.C.A. to the N.U.R., and also with the more difficult problems that arise out of the present overlapping between the N.U.R. and the A.S.L.E. and F. These problems will, however, be more easily understood if we first sketch in outline the history of the railwaymen's movement.

[1] The *Railway Telegraph Clerks*, founded in 1897, who had 325 members in 1910, were absorbed by the R.C.A. in 1911. The larger organisation is undoubtedly in a better position to serve the interests of this grade. The R.T.C.A. worked on an annual subscription of only 4s. for working expenses, and paid no benefits. It did, however, co-operate with the other railway Unions in the joint Conference which met in 1907 to demand recognition and the right of Union officials to negotiate on behalf of the railwaymen.

CHAPTER II.

Early History

Of the great industries of this country, railways were the latest to be established, and railway Trade Unions came later still. For many years after the railways had grown up there was no organisation amongst railwaymen, and it was not till 1871, when the companies had a quarter of a million men in their employment, that the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants was founded. Prior to 1871 there had been one or two attempts to begin railway societies, but without success. The Railway Working Man's Provident Benefit Society, started in 1865 amongst the guards in the Great Western Railway, by Charles Bassett-Vincent, was crushed two years later by wholesale dismissal of its prominent members. About the same time an engine drivers' and firemen's society, which was started on the North-Eastern Railway, perished after an unsuccessful strike.

The history of the early years of railway trade unionism is in the main a history of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and it is therefore necessary to deal in some detail with the circumstances of its origin. The society took its origin from the exertions of Michael Bass, M.P., himself a large railway shareholder, on behalf of the men working the railways. He set on foot an enquiry into the hours and conditions of railway servants. This enquiry showed that the hours worked were excessive : that a 90 hours' week was frequent, and that in some cases 100 hours were worked. Particular instances were brought to light of railway servants working 20 hours and more at a stretch. The result of the campaign which followed these revelations was the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and both at the formation and for several years afterwards Michael Bass consistently played the part of fairy godmother to the Society.

The main concern of the new organisation was hours and accidents, and this continued to be its predominant interest for the next 30 years. It was not until 1880, following on an increase in hours, a reduction in wages, and a corresponding increase in railway dividends, that a strike policy was accepted. Little came of this, and the first signs of active Trade Unionism only began to appear after 1889, the year of the London Dockers' strike.

Even in 1894, the A.S.R.S. could be described by the authors

of the "History of Trade Unionism" as "a trade friendly society of the old type." The status of the Society is indicated by the list of patrons and presidents, none of whom were working men. It did not emerge from this patronage until Walter Hudson, M.P. —the first *bona fide* railway worker to hold the office—was elected President in 1891. The weakness of the Society in these years is shown by its membership figures. In 1872 it claimed 17,247 members, but from this point it fell steadily to 6,321 in 1882. Then a revival began and in 1890 it had risen to 26,360.

Meantime other societies had been founded. The Scottish Society of Railway Servants was the earliest of these. Its membership was small from the beginning, and like the English Society it was hampered from the first by the incompetence and lack of energy of its officials. When it was absorbed by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in 1892, after the disastrous Scottish strike, it only brought with it about a thousand members.

The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, and the United Pointsmen and Signalmen's Society were each founded in 1880. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, being a sectional society, was antagonistic to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, which claimed to be an all-grades society, and the internal history of Trade Unionism has been largely made up of the jealousies and quarrels of these two. The United Pointsmen and Signalmen were even more of the friendly society type than the early Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and, with a membership of never more than a few thousand, they pursued an uneventful career up to the time of their fusion with the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in 1913. The General Railway Workers' Union (1889) was of a different type. It aimed, in the main, at organising the unskilled workers, up to that time neglected by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. At its 1890 Congress a resolution was passed:

> "That this Union shall remain a fighting one and shall not be encumbered with any sick or accident fund."

Its membership was considerable at first, but many of these soon dropped away.

Thus, after 20 years of organisation, the total number of Trade Unionists on the railways was 48,000 out of 381,000 workers, 200,000 of whom were in traffic grades. Of the 48,000 England had 43,500, Ireland 3,000, and Scotland 1,500. The acute position of the men at this time (1892) is well illustrated by a report prepared by Mr. Channing, M.P., for the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Railway Servants (Hours of Labour). From it we learn, not only that the railway autocrats considered recognition of Trade Unions out of the question, but that in Sir George Findlay's opinion "you might

as well have a Trade Union or an amalgamated society in the army, where discipline has to be kept at a very high standard, as have it on railways." At the same time the manager of the North British Railway met a petition for shorter hours by the final threat: "It may be well to remind the staff that the company have always on the list of applicants for employment a number of eligible men."

For giving evidence before this Select Committee several railway men were dismissed: but as this was a breach of parliamentary privilege the manager and directors of the railway in question were summoned by the Speaker to the bar of the House of Commons and there severely admonished. But the most significant passage in this Report deals with accidents and hours. It deserves quotation in full:—

> "The absence, in most instances, of any record of the hours of railway servants who have met with fatal accidents in discharge of their duty leaves it uncertain in how many of these fatalities exhaustion from overwork has been a contributory cause. The two or three instances to which public attention has been drawn make it more than probable that while excessive hours of work have in all cases a tendency to bring about casualties, casualties and fatalities from this cause are not infrequent. On December 31st, 1888, an unfortunate man named Gurr was cut down by a train while fog-signalling on the Brighton Line, near London Bridge. He was nearly 60 years of age, and had long been in the service of the company. At the time of his death he had been on duty for 23½ hours out of 30 hours in dense fog, and in bitterly cold weather. An almost exactly similar case occurred on the North London Railway in 1891.
>
> "But the most striking exposure of the danger to the lives of men involved in excessive hours is in the remarkable report of Major Marindin on the death of Choules, a goods guard on the Midland and South Western Junction Railway. This unfortunate man was killed while shunting on a dark, stormy and rainy night. In his report Major Marindin says: 'The reason is not far to seek, for it appears that James Choule had at the time been upon duty for a period of no less than 22 hours 18 minutes consecutively, with no more rest than he could snatch during the periods when the train was standing, which were of very little value to him.' There was no offer during the journey to relieve him; and, so far from these excessive hours having been an exceptional thing, his time-table from September 22nd to October 16th, the day of his fatal accident, 'shows that his powers of endurance had upon many other occasions been taxed to an unfair

and dangerous limit. In this period of 27 days he had worked on 24 days, his average daily working hours being 12 hours and 58 minutes, though his booked hours were only 10 hours 56 minutes, while the average for the last three days of his life, coming on duty after a rest of only 6 hours 57 minutes, were 18 hours 46 minutes working hours and 13 hours 54 minutes booked hours.' On 11 days out of 24 his booked hours were practically 15 per day, and far too long; but the hours actually worked ranged from 15¾, the lowest, to 23¼, giving an average for the 11 days of 19 hours 11 minutes, or an average excess over the booked time, which in itself was outrageous, of about 40 hours. The results of Major Marindin's full enquiry into the hours of all drivers and guards upon this line show, in his words, "that the hours of work of the men responsible for the safe working of the trains are habitually excessive, principally among those working the goods trains.' The report gives instances of drivers on duty during periods ranging from three to seven weeks, in September, October, and November, 1891, of 26 hours 50 minutes, 29 hours 10 minutes, 26 hours 40 minutes, 26 hours 10 minutes, 26 hours 4 minutes, 26 hours, 25 hours 40 minutes, 24 hours 40 minutes, 24 hours, 25 hours 12 minutes, 25 hours 30 minutes, 20 hours 30 minutes, 28 hours 35 minutes; and instances of duty of 47 hours 40 minutes, with only 20 minutes' rest between the two turns of duty of 23 hours 40 minutes, and 24 hours; of 43 hours 40 minutes, with 5 hours' rest; of 61 hours with two intervals of 4 hours 40 minutes, and 4 hours between the turns; of 26 hours, 13 hours, and 22 hours; of 42 hours 10 minutes, with one hour's rest only; and a driver, after a turn of 24 hours 40 minutes, being sent with a special train, after only three hours' rest, for another turn of duty of 13 hours 30 minutes, making 41 hours 10 minutes in full. A goods guard worked over 17 hours on 16 days out of 44, and on 8 of those days for over 20 hours. These facts would scarcely be credible if not attested by an experienced officer of the Board of Trade. They establish, in our opinion, a strong presumption that on other lines to which public attention has not as yet been closely directed, and which, from want of capital, are worked with an insufficient staff, systematic overwork, indistinguishable from white slavery, may be prevailing even at the present moment, and make it an imperative duty of the Board of Trade to promptly place themselves in the position to obtain either by returns, or by inquiry, or both, a closer insight into the real state of affairs on many railways."

The first really big movement on the railways was the "all-grades" movement of 1896-7. It was greatly stimulated by an

ineffectual attempt (December, 1896) to suppress Trade Unionism on the London and North-Western Railway. A number of goods guards were victimized and afterwards reinstated. At this period the membership of the A.S.R.S. leaped up to over 85,000, a figure it did not again reach for nearly fifteen years.

From 1897 onwards railway Trade Unions progressed uneventfully until the "all-grades" movement of 1906. Successive attempts to achieve joint action between the A.S.R.S. and the A.S.L.E. and F. all fell through, though there was for a while a Federation to which both societies belonged. Parliamentary representation came to the A.S.R.S. with the election of Mr. Richard Bell, the General Secretary, in 1902.

The membership of the A.S.R.S. reached 60,000 in 1900. It then fell again to 52,000 in 1903, but rose to 70,000 in 1906, and, after another fall, to 75,153 in 1910; at the time of the fusion, in 1912, it stood at 132,002. Its history before 1906 is in many respects a record of failure, redeemed from insignificance by the accidents which made it the centre of the two most famous cases in Trade Union law—the Taff Vale case of 1902 and the Osborne judgment of 1909.

These cases affected the whole Trade Union movement, and to do more than mention them here is outside the scope of this book, but these two proofs of the partiality of the law to the possessing classes are not the least of the causes that have led to the great awakening of Labour on the railways.

CHAPTER III.

Nineteen Hundred and Six to Nineteen Hundred and Eleven

What may be termed modern history in railway organisation dates from the "All Grades" movement of 1906. That movement, which was directed against the deeply-rooted idea of grade snobbery and exclusiveness, took the form of a demand for an eight-hour day for *all* men engaged in the manipulation of traffic, a maximum of ten hours a day for *all* railwaymen, and immediate increases of pay, especially for overtime and Sunday work. The threatened strike of 1907, however, though it arose directly out of this programme, actually centred round the question of *recognition,* about which the railway companies have always been even more stiff-necked than employers in other industries. When the A.S.R.S. demanded that the Companies should meet them to discuss the programme, the answer was a curt negative. The employers replied that there was no general unrest among railway workers, and that, even if there was, the A.S.R.S. had no right to speak on behalf of the majority, who were "free and independent men." At the same time, the Companies attempted to combat the contention of the Union that the railwaymen as a whole were grossly underpaid; but subsequent investigations by the Board of Trade confirmed the A.S.R.S. figures on nearly every point.

The threat of a national stoppage at once brought the Government into the field, and Mr. Lloyd George, then President of the Board of Trade, reaped great momentary glory with the general public by negotiating the famous settlement of 1907, which, by its breakdown, led later on to the national strike of 1911, and, indirectly to the formation of the N.U.R.

The "all grades" movement began in 1906 with an elaborate programme and a demand for recognition of the Unions. It ended in the unsatisfactory settlement of 1907, which left the Unions completely unrecognised and relegated the programme to the limbo of a series of dilatory Conciliation and Arbitration Boards. It is necessary for the understanding of subsequent events that the main lines of this settlement should be understood.[1]

[1] For the full text of the 1907 Conciliation Scheme, see Appendix C.

On most of the important lines in the United Kingdom, Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration were to be set up to deal with questions of wages and hours of labour. Each Company was to have its own separate system of Conciliation Boards, and there was to be a board for each grade, or group of allied grades. These sectional boards were to consist of an equal number of representatives of the Company and of its employees, the latter to be elected by the whole body of workers in the particular grade concerned from their own number. No application was to come before a board until it had "been made in the ordinary course through the officers of the Department concerned." That is to say, the men had first to state their case by way of petition or deputation to the management, and only if the two sides failed to agree could the Conciliation Boards be called in. If no agreement could be come to by the sectional boards, either side might refer the question to the Central Conciliation Board of the railway concerned; and, if still no agreement could be reached, the dispute had to be referred to a single arbitrator, to be appointed either by agreement between the two sides, or, failing that, by the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Master of the Rolls. The arbitrator's decision was to be binding and final. This scheme was to remain in force for at least six years, and was thereafter to be terminable on a year's notice from either side.

It says much for the ingenuity of Mr. Lloyd George or of those who were behind him that the railwaymen were persuaded to accept such a settlement. Doubtless, they did so largely from a sense of their own weakness, feeling that their Union was not yet strong enough to bear the brunt of a national strike. But even so, it is astonishing to-day to recall that they consented to be bound for at least seven years by an untried scheme that showed every sign of being heavily weighted against them. The Unions were not merely unrecognised, in that the Unions, as such, played no part in the election of the boards; the men's officials were definitely shut out from participation in the working of the scheme by the provision that all members of the Conciliation Boards must be actual employees of the Company concerned. The machinery set up was obviously cumbrous and adaptable to those dilatory tactics which the Companies might be expected to adopt. And, finally, the last appeal was to "impartial" arbitration, and the "impartial" arbitrator was to be chosen by two such "impartial" persons as the Speaker and the Master of the Rolls. The fact that a Union official was to be allowed to act as advocate before the arbitrator, though it has been called "the thin end of the wedge of recognition," in reality did little or nothing to modify the effect of the scheme.

Naturally, things went badly—for the men. The average weekly earnings of railway servants, as given by the Board of

Trade, were lower in 1910 than they had been in 1907. Discontent with the arbitrators' awards was widespread, and the companies were accused of doing all they could to hamper the men in their efforts to get their grievances brought before the Conciliation Boards. Moreover, the Unions were continually growing in strength and numbers, and the question of recognition was more than ever a source of discontent.

The breaking-point came in 1911, and the successful strikes of seamen and transport workers in that year did much to precipitate the crisis. On August 5th, about 1,000 of the employees of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway at Liverpool struck for an advance, on the ground that they could not get their grievances dealt with by the Conciliation Boards. Without authorisation from the Unions, this move was followed by strikes in Manchester and many other cities, and the call for a national strike became urgent. The Executives of the four Unions concerned—the A.S.R.S., A.S.L.E. and F., G.R.W.U. and U.P. and S.S.—met in joint session and offered the Companies 24 hours to decide between meeting the men and facing a national strike. The Government at once intervened, in the hope of repeating its successful manœuvre of 1907, and Mr. Asquith promised a Royal Commission to consider the amendment of the 1907 scheme. The Unions, however, with their previous experience fresh in memory, refused to accept these terms, and the national strike began on August 17th. It was not universal; but it was enough to disorganise the railway service and to bring many factories to a standstill. The representatives of the Companies now at last consented for once to meet the men at the Board of Trade. As a result of this conference, a settlement was signed and work was resumed on August 21st, except on the North Eastern Railway, which, having a separate Conciliation scheme of its own, was not a party to the 1907 agreement, and was therefore not affected by the terms of settlement. Here, too, however, work was resumed on the 23rd, after a similar settlement had been separately reached. The main lines of the settlement were as follows: the strike was to end at once, and there was to be complete reinstatement; the Conciliation Boards were to meet at once to consider grievances, but this arrangement was to be only temporary, pending the report of the Royal Commission appointed by the Government.

Everything therefore hung upon the report of the Commission, which was appointed on August 22nd. It included no railway employers or employees, but was supposed to consist of two representatives of the employing and two of the working-class, with the inevitable "impartial" chairman. The employers' interests were represented by Sir T. R. Ratcliffe-Ellis and Mr. C. G. Beale, the men's by Mr. Arthur Henderson, of the Labour Party, and Mr. John Burnett, once Secretary of the A.S.E., but long a Govern-

ment servant as chief Labour correspondent to the Board of Trade. "Impartiality" was impersonated by Sir David Harrel, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., as Chairman.

The Commission reported on October 18th, suggesting an amended scheme of Conciliation, which aimed at rectifying some of the most crying abuses by speeding up the machinery, but combined with this a strengthening of the element of arbitration. The Executives of the four Unions at once met, and intimated to the Government that they could not accept the scheme as it stood, demanding at the same time that the Companies should meet them to negotiate. This the Companies refused to do, and the Unions thereupon decided to ballot their members on the question of a renewed national strike. On November 22nd the House of Commons, after a discussion initiated by the Labour Party, passed a resolution urging the need for a meeting between the two sides, and the companies thereupon agreed to a conference. The meeting was held on December 7th, and resulted in the amended Conciliation scheme which, owing to the war, has remained in force up to the present time.

The new scheme[1] followed the general lines of the Royal Commission's Report, but introduced certain modifications desired by the Unions. It was more detailed than the settlement of 1907, which had been found ambiguous in many particulars. But, complete and self-contained as it was, it preserved the same broad features. The Boards were given power to deal with conditions of employment as well as wages and hours of labour; but questions of discipline and management were explicitly, and not as before tacitly, excluded from their scope. Again, no demand for an advance was to be considered by a board till it had been brought before the companies through the ordinary channels of petition and deputation, and it was provided that, normally, there must be first a petition to the management signed by 25 per cent. of those affected. The Royal Commission had recommended that any reduction in wages proposed by the Company should take effect unless 25 per cent. of those affected petitioned against it; but this clause was deleted in the final settlement. The main change from the 1907 scheme was in the constitution of the Conciliation Boards. The sectional boards remained; the Central Boards for each Company were abolished. The "impartial" Chairman was transferred from the Central to the Sectional Boards, but his decision was still to be final. There were also additional provisions to secure a speedier settlement of points at issue. The Irish railways, which were not parties to the 1911 agreement, continued, and still continue, to work under the 1907 scheme.

[1] For the full text of the 1911 Conciliation Scheme, see Appendix F.

The general effect of the change was this: the new sectional board, at an ordinary meeting, would be much like the old, and there would be, as before, an equal number of representatives of each side chosen in the old way. The difference would come when such a board found it impossible to arrive at an agreement; for instead of referring the question to a Central, "all grades" Board, the Sectional Board would call in its "impartial" Chairman, who would then give a binding settlement for the grade concerned. Thus, while the machinery was made more rapid, the isolation of the various grades was made absolute, and a further obstacle was thrown in the way of an all-grades movement. The N.U.R. have tried to overcome this, wherever possible, by getting the same Secretary appointed to all the Boards on a single railway; but it is probable that this feature in the settlement has had much to do with the dissensions between the N.U.R. and the A.S.L.E. and F.; for its effect has been to divide the interests of one grade from those of another, to the detriment of the fighting strength of the whole body of railwaymen.

One further change introduced by the 1911 scheme was clear gain to the men. While the Unions still remained entirely unrecognised, it was made possible for the men to elect as Secretary to their side of a Conciliation Board a person not in the employ of the Company. This has made it possible for the Union officials to take part in the administration of the scheme, though the Unions are not recognised, and has provided the men with better equipped advocates of their cause. Thus we find Mr. J. E. Williams acting as Secretary on four railways, in each case for all the sections: Mr. J. H. Thomas acts for all sections on four Railways, and for most sections on four others, and so on. It should, however, be pointed out that this is in no sense "recognition," as the election to the men's side of the boards is still made by all employees, Unionists and non-Unionists alike.

Unsatisfactory as this new scheme has proved, it cannot be denied that it resulted at the outset in certain gains in wages, which were, however, certainly not above the average gains of the years 1911 and 1912 in other industries, and which were, in any case, long overdue. In fact, the gain in 1912 was considerably less than that of the previous year. In 1911 the number employed rose by 900, and the average earnings for a typical week in December from 25s. 9d. to 26s. 8¼d. In 1912, the corresponding week showed an increase of nearly 10,000 in the number employed, while the average earnings rose from 26s. 8¼d. to 27s. 4½d. The Board of Trade itself, however, which is responsible for these figures, explains that the apparent increase may be illusory, as the statement shows not *rates* of wages, but actual earnings, and may therefore have been affected in 1912 by overtime worked during a prosperous week.

Whether as a result of greater prosperity or of better rates of wages, it is clear that the wages bill of the Companies increased. The condition of the railway service, however, still left, as it leaves now, very much to be desired, and the gains from the settlement of 1911 were so small that they have stimulated rather than quieted the unrest. Indeed, despite the existence of a scheme designed to prevent disputes, no industry was, during the three years before the war, subject to so frequent upheavals as the railway service, and, while there was no national stoppage, there were many occasions on which such a stoppage threatened, as well as many actual strikes within confined areas. Of these it will be easier to speak when we have described in more detail the great Union which arose out of the co-operation of the four Executives in the 1911 dispute.

CHAPTER IV.

The National Union of Railwaymen

At any rate on the surface, there had been harmony among the four Unions up to the settlement of 1911. They had acted together throughout, and they had gained immensely by presenting a united front alike to the companies and to the Government. Naturally, they wished to give such an alliance, so far purely informal, a guarantee of permanency. The negotiations took place during 1912, and resulted, as we have seen, in the formation of the *National Union of Railwaymen,* which came formally into existence at the beginning of 1913. In the N.U.R. three of the four Unions were merged: only the A.S.L.E. and F. refused to come in, taking as its watchword the phrase, "Organise your trade, *federate* your industry," which now appears on its circulars and advertisements. In this attitude, as we have seen and shall see further, the A.S.L.E. and F. was considerably strengthened by the completely sectional conciliation scheme of 1911.

The formation of the N.U.R. is peculiarly interesting at the present, when so many attempts at closer unity are being made and suggested; for it shows how the difficulties of sectional representation, finance, etc., within a big "industrial" Union have been to some extent actually overcome in the most important amalgamation of recent years.

The N.U.R. declares in its rules that its first object is "to secure the complete organisation of all workers employed on or in connection with any railway in the United Kingdom." In these words it professes its faith in Industrial Unionism, and its consciousness of (1) the supreme importance of blackleg-proof organisation; (2) the identity of interest among all grades within the industry, and (3) the danger of rival and overlapping Unions. Its rules further provide that "Any other Railway Trade Union not being included in the Union at the time of its registration may be admitted on terms to be mutually agreed upon."

The N.U.R., then, is a conscious attempt at organisation by *industry,* instead of trade or craft. The inherent and transitional difficulties of this form of organisation have already manifested themselves, and will be discussed later on; but everything seems to show that, with the possible exception of coal mining, there is no industry more immediately suited to it and none in which it was more urgently needed.

Even before it could be formed the Union had to encounter difficulties. Many schemes of amalgamation have been paralysed by that clause in the Act of 1876 which makes a two-thirds' majority vote in favour of fusion compulsory. In this case the difficulty was overcome by means of a second ballot, and a systematic canvass was carried on by branch committees of the old Unions for the purpose of getting the votes of that large section of Trade Unionists which habitually ignores all ballots on questions of policy. The ballots actually extended over a period of six months—from January to June, 1912—and in the end the requisite majority was secured.

As the constitution of the N.U.R. is likely to be as much the "New Model" of the next decades as that of the A.S.E. has been for the last sixty years, it is necessary to describe it in outline. Superficially regarded, it presents few new features; it has much the same body of officials, the same system of branch and district organisation, and the same distribution of power between a Delegate Meeting and an Executive Committee with which we are familiar in Unions of the old type. It is peculiar chiefly in the manner in which its Executive is elected; for here it has confronted a new situation in a new way. The supreme government is vested in an Annual General Meeting consisting of sixty representatives, elected on a district basis, together with the President and General Secretary. Delegates can only be elected to the A.G.M. for three successive years, and every three years the Executive groups the branches anew in approximately equal electoral districts. The A.G.M. controls the Executive Committee; it has power to make, amend, or rescind rules, to remove any officer of the Society, "to inaugurate any movement, or decree any proceedings in the interests of the Union and its members." It is in theory supreme, and it actually controls the policy of the Union on big general questions. This is possible because in addition to the A.G.M., Special General Meetings are called to deal with big questions of policy.

Inevitably, however, very much power is placed in the hands of the Executive Committee, which consists of the President and General Secretary and 24 other members. It is the method of electing these that is the most significant feature in the constitution of the N.U.R. The rule (III.3) is worth quoting at length :

> "The 24 representatives on the Executive Committee shall be chosen by ballot on the single transferable vote system. The Union shall be formed into six electoral districts for this purpose. Within these districts the various grades shall be divided into four electoral departments. The electoral departments shall be classified as follows : (1) Locomotive department; (2) traffic department; (3) goods and

cartage department; (4) engineering shops and permanent way."

Further provisions provide for triennial election in each district, one-third of the Executive retiring annually. All members of the Committee must be in the employ of a railway company; after sitting for three years they become ineligible for re-election for a similar period, and the branch to which they belong may not nominate another candidate for the E.C. for three years. One further provision must be quoted:

> "The Executive Committee shall be divided into four departmental sub-committees, comprising the representatives of the departments named."—(III. 1.)

The Executive meets quarterly; the sub-committees meet quarterly if necessary, and prior to the meeting of the E.C. Special meetings may be summoned by the President or by the General Secretary. Its powers are subject only to those of the General Meeting: it interprets the rules, and may make levies. "It may take the opinion of the members or branches of the Union upon any question that may arise, but shall not be bound by the opinion so expressed."—(III. 5.) The sole appeal from it is to the General Meeting.

In the original constitution of the N.U.R., as drafted in 1912, the powers of the Executive were considerably wider than they are to-day. In Rule 13, Section 3, it was laid down that "the Executive Committee shall have power to inaugurate, conduct *and settle* all trade movements between its members and their employers," and the optional power to take a ballot, without being bound by the result, was the sole check upon this arbitrary authority. Criticism very soon fastened upon this, and against the opposition of the Head Office a resolution was carried at the Annual General Meeting in 1915 and again in 1916 making it obligatory for all settlements to be ratified by an Annual or Special General Meeting. The original rule defining the powers of the Executive in respect of trade movements was subsequently modified by the omission of the words " and settle."

This represents a very considerable reduction in the powers of the Executive, and at the General Meeting Mr. J. H. Thomas argued against it with all his power on the ground that there could be no speedy settlement of trade questions if the Executive were unable to negotiate with the railway companies as plenipotentiaries, armed with full power to conclude a settlement on behalf of the members. On the other side, the need for a democratic method was strongly urged, and it was pointed out that the proposed system of ratification by delegates has long been the practice of the miners and of other great Unions. The rejection of the

proposed new Conciliation scheme by a Special General Meeting in March, 1916, which is described later, was the first instance of the new system, this course being taken in deference to the resolution of the 1915 A.G.M., although the change in the constitution had not actually come into operation.

Despite the reduction of authority in the case of national settlements, the power of the Executive is still very great, and clearly much depends upon the composition of a body possessing such wide authority. Able to override the opinion of the Society as given by general ballot, and subject only to the A.G.M. in the conclusion of national settlements, it clearly runs the danger of becoming bureaucratic, unless it is kept closely in touch with its electorate. This close and constant touch it is endeavoured to secure by the methods of election. The annual retirement and ineligibility for re-election of one-third of its members secure a continual infusion of new blood, along with that continuity which is necessary for the conduct of a great Union. It is, however, true that the changing personnel of the Executive tends to make the permanent officials more powerful.

More important by far are the actual electoral arrangements. A great centralised Union, including many classes of workers, may easily allow its Executive to get out of touch with the feeling both of the various localities and of the various crafts or grades of which it is composed. The constitution of the N.U.R. is an attempt to secure the effective representation of both districts and sections. In the first place, every committeeman represents and comes from a certain district; and, secondly, within this district, he represents, and is a member of, a certain grade or group of grades. And, lest even so the various sections should feel their interests swamped, the Executive is divided into four sub-committees, to each of which the care of a special group of grades is committed. Sectional interests are first represented apart; then, in the whole committee, the attempt is made to reconcile them.

It is too soon yet to estimate the effect of this system; but it is easy to see how important it may be in the drafting of an "all-grades" programme. The task in such a case is, first, to find out what each section wants, and, secondly, to harmonise the various demands. The first is clearly the proper work of the sub-committee; the second the work of the committee as a whole. It is safe to say that some such system will be essential wherever many grades are united in a single Union—wherever, that is, the principle of Industrial Unionism is adopted. The importance of this question will become manifest when we deal with the relations between the N.U.R. and the A.S.L.E. and F.

In the arrangement of its official staff, also, the N.U.R. has adopted a wise policy of specialisation. There is a General Secretary, and under him are four Assistant Secretaries, each of whom

has special charge of a distinct part of the Union's work. Finance, Legal Matters, Movements, and Organisation are each in the charge of a special officer, and this undoubtedly makes for greater efficiency than the old indiscriminate system.

Financially, too, the Union is in line with the needs of an industrial organisation. At the time of the fusion, the finances of the three Societies were pooled absolutely, existing benefits being assured to members of the old organisations. For new members there are various scales of contributions and benefits, to meet the needs of the various grades. It is, to say the least, a considerable weakness that this difference of contributions and benefits extends to strike pay as well as to "friendly" benefits; for many of those who recognise the need for graduated and optional unemployment, sickness and accident funds hold that strike pay should, in the interests of solidarity, be uniform for all grades. The N.U.R., however, pays strike benefit on two scales, at 12s. and 6s. per week, an extra shilling being allowed in both cases for each child under twelve years of age.

The system of district organisation is also worthy of notice, as it emphasises the complete centralisation of control which is the governing principle of the N.U.R. Branches in any locality may, with the sanction of the Executive, form themselves into a Council, which must confine itself to propaganda work and to serving the Union in a purely consultative capacity. The Councils have no governing nor controlling power over any member or branch; they are concerned, in theory, not with the initiation of trade movements, but with the organisation of the unorganised in their respective districts. The control of the policy remains in the hands of the Executive, or finally of the General Meeting.

This is, in theory, the position of the District Councils; but in practice they have acquired very considerable power in the initiation of forward movements. At the regular District Council meetings, questions of policy are freely discussed, and proposals for forward action canvassed. This has been especially true during the war period, when the more active Councils have in reality taken the initiative in pressing for better conditions. As the Councils have no direct authority in approaching the Executive on such matters, what usually happens is that current questions are first fully debated at the Council meetings. Then resolutions are put forward through the branches on the lines suggested at the Councils, and in this way the letter of the constitution is observed.

This aggressive action and extension of functions on the part of the Councils is by no means always welcomed by the Executive and the Head Office, but it is easy to see that this development is inevitable in a Union where members are so alive as those of the N.U.R. Indeed, this tendency may even be made stronger

by the fact that the constitution rules out the District Councils from any power in such matters.

In their own sphere, the Councils have in many cases done exceedingly good work. They have been active and successful propagandists on behalf of the Union, and have contributed largely to its increase in membership. Some of them have, in addition, been energetic in the very necessary task of working-class education, co-operating largely with the Central Labour College, which is now controlled and financed by the N.U.R. and the South Wales Miners' Federation jointly. The work of the London District Council in this sphere deserves special mention. Numerous classes have been organised with success, and the Council has published, among other literature, a book entitled, "Outlines of the History of the Working Class Movement," by Mr. W. Craik, Vice-Principal of the Central Labour College.

CHAPTER V.

Strikes

We described in the last chapter the modification of the N.U.R. constitution which took away the power of the Executive to conclude settlements, and transferred it to the General Meeting. We also quoted the rule which empowers, but does not oblige, the Executive to ballot the members, without in any case binding them to accept the result of such a ballot. The modifications introduced in 1916 in no way affect the absolute centralisation of power in dealing with strikes and movements, though they alter its distribution between the Executive and the General Meeting.

On this question, Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., the Union's General Secretary, has expressed himself in this fashion: "The decision for or against a strike should be, and is, made by the Executive Committee, and should not depend upon a ballot of the members. In actual practice the ballot does not work for this purpose. It gives warning to the employers and the decision cannot be based upon a full knowledge of all the circumstances, which, as a matter of fact, often change from day to day at times of crisis. A railway strike must become general to a very large extent. It is practically impossible to isolate any one system, owing to the number of points at which they all overlap or touch one another. Sporadic, or sectional, strikes are no good. Some other unit, not previously consulted, is always involved and weakens the position."

This view is clearly right in so far as it insists upon the need for unified control of strikes upon the railways, but it does not prove whether control is better vested in the Executive or in the General Meeting. The railwaymen are faced by a unified enemy, organised upon a national scale: they can only hope to defeat the great national entente of the Companies by means of a strong national organisation.

But, despite the official view, the short life of the N.U.R. has furnished occasions for a number of unauthorised, sporadic, local strikes, which it is difficult to condemn. These fall into two clearly distinct classes. First, there has been the series of "one-man" strikes or threats of strikes, from the famous Knox strike on the North Eastern in 1912 to the strike of restaurant car employees on the Great Western Railway in 1914 to protest

against the victimisation of one of their number. Driver Knox, Guard Richardson and others have become proverbial names in connection with this type of movement. Secondly, at the time of the Dublin dispute there were in many important railway centres spontaneous outbreaks of the sympathetic strike, the most famous being the "Driver James" case in South Wales.

No account of recent railway history can afford to ignore either type of dispute; for they bear witness alike to the unsatisfactory nature of the existing conciliation machinery and to the growing spirit of solidarity that is abroad among railwaymen. Of the first type the Knox strike will do as an example. Driver Knox of the North Eastern Railway was convicted in court of being drunk and disorderly. Despite the fact that he was at the time off duty and would not have come on duty for twenty-four hours, the Company thereupon reduced him to a lower grade. Without authorisation the North Eastern men spontaneously ceased work, much to the dismay of the N.U.R. officials. For days the capitalist press was full of the "right to get drunk" strike, and seldom had its bias against the workers been so shamelessly revealed. The Company, justifying its action, contended that drunkenness in a driver was a danger to the public safety. The men replied that, in the first place, as the event took place on Saturday night and Knox was not on Sunday duty, there could have been no danger to the public, and it was therefore none of the Company's business; and, in the second place, that Knox had not been drunk, and that there had been a miscarriage of justice. Soon the trouble became so threatening that the Government sent down a special Commissioner, who, after re-trying the case, quashed the previous sentence by giving Knox a free pardon. Meanwhile, a settlement was being negotiated between the North Eastern Railway, which alone among the Companies recognised Trade Unionism, and Mr. Walter Hudson, M.P., on behalf of the Union. In the end a settlement was reached by which Knox was reinstated; but the men were subjected to deductions from their pay to punish them for the unauthorised strike. To these deductions the Union agreed, in order to avoid a series of prosecutions by the Company for breach of contract. Doubts, however, arose as to the legality of the deductions, and the Union itself assumed the liability. This "one man" movement, therefore, ended in a very doubtful victory for the men. Reinstatement was secured; but the men were mulcted for an action which the reinstatement of Driver Knox proved to be justified.

The series of disputes of which this is only an instance centres round the treatment of individual employees. Perhaps the most important of all was that which arose out of the refusal of Guard Richardson to disobey the Company's rules at the command of

a superior in the service. In this case the guard was dismissed for refusing to take charge of a train which, in his opinion and according to the rules laid down by the Company in the interests of public safety, was loaded beyond its capacity. He was accordingly dismissed, and at once an agitation for his reinstatement sprang up. There was in this instance no unauthorised stoppage, and reinstatement was secured through the Union; but for several days a national strike seemed imminent. A third agitation arose in connection with an accident in Cumberland, after which Driver Caudle was sent to prison for negligence. In this case, also, the men rightly resented the punishment, and again, when a stoppage seemed imminent, he was released by the Government and reinstated by the Company.

These three well-known cases, only one of which was accompanied by an unauthorised strike, have been brought together in order to emphasise one of the many defects of the Conciliation scheme of 1911. The Conciliation Boards are still expressly forbidden to deal with questions of discipline and management; but these are the very questions over which, during the years immediately succeeding the settlement, most of the trouble arose. If any new Conciliation scheme is to be brought into force, it is essential that it should be possible to bring before the Boards any question, no matter what it is, that may lead to a dispute between the two parties.

The second type of unauthorised stoppage raised an even larger question; for it is concerned with nothing smaller than the whole problem of sympathetic action. During the famous Dublin dispute of 1913 there was a widespread demand among the more revolutionary Trade Unionists for sympathetic action in England. Some advocated a general strike, others the policy of isolating the port of Dublin by a refusal to handle traffic going to it or coming from it. These policies were both rejected by the English Trade Union leaders; but certain railwaymen, convinced that they were being compelled to handle "tainted goods" from Dublin, struck work in sympathy without the sanction of their Executive. Stoppages of this type took place at Liverpool, Birmingham, Crewe, Derby, Sheffield, Gloucester, Nottingham and Leeds, and affected in all not less than 10,000 men. It is now clear that the men acted under a misapprehension, and that the goods they were handling were not in fact more "tainted" than all capitalist products: but none the less these strikes were a valuable indication of the new spirit among railwaymen. They ended in the reinstatement of the strikers, accompanied by an undertaking, forced on the men by the Union, to handle all goods.

Of the same type was the curious "Driver James" strike in South Wales, which, beginning in the refusal of a single man to handle what he considered tainted traffic, became, upon the dis-

missal of James and of Driver Reynolds, who struck in sympathy with him, a strike covering the greater part of the locomotive men employed by the Great Western Railway in South Wales. All along the demand for the reinstatement of the dismissed drivers was coupled with "sympathy" for the Dublin strikers and with the demand for an eight hours' day, on which the Union had recently withheld sanction for a movement. The men concerned, including the two drivers round whom the dispute centred, were for the most part members of the A.S.L.E. and F.; but many N.U.R. men were also thrown idle by the dispute. In the end, the officials of the two Unions secured the reinstatement of all the men except the two drivers. There was for some time afterwards considerable anger in South Wales against Mr. J. H. Thomas, who was mainly responsible for the settlement. The strong feeling amongst the A.S.L.E. and F. men found expression in a special grant voted to Driver James by this Society.

These various forms of sympathetic strike raise two big problems, as they have two main aspects: they are unauthorised, and they are sympathetic. In the discussions which have raged around them these two points have generally been confused; but they have, in essence, nothing to do with each other. There have been many unauthorised strikes not of a sympathetic kind; there is no reason why there should not be authorised sympathetic strikes. It will be well, therefore, to take the two points separately.

It is not difficult to show, as the officials of the Union have often shown, that the prevalence of unauthorised strikes on all the railways is fatal to effective common action. To make a national "all grades" programme effective, resources must be husbanded, and there must be a strong centralised power in control of the movement. The officials are bound, as a rule, to discountenance unauthorised stoppages. But the mere fact that they occur, and that frequently, is a sure sign that all is not well with the Union machinery. They are, however, largely the effect of that policy of sitting on the safety-valve which has been so persistently adopted by the railway companies. Till a better scheme of negotiation between the parties is in force, and a ready discussion of all problems that arise can be obtained, unauthorised stoppages will probably persist, and even win unwilling support from the Union. The 1911 strike itself began as an unauthorised stoppage.

The sympathetic element in these strikes raises another problem. It is usually pointed out, with perfect justice, that the adoption by railwaymen of the policy of refusing to handle "tainted goods" would involve them in practically every trade dispute, no matter in what industry it took place. Moreover, the railway companies, it is pointed out, are common carriers, who cannot discriminate between the goods they carry. This latter

argument has little weight; for if on other grounds the sympathetic policy is for the good of Labour, it should not disturb the railwaymen that their action might involve the companies in a breach of the law. The former argument, however, cannot be so lightly dismissed; for it is obvious that the N.U.R. could not possibly finance a sympathetic policy out of its own resources: nor could it justly be asked to do so. If the sympathetic policy is to be adopted, it must be the work of the whole body of organised Labour, and on the whole body must fall the burden of supporting it. Applied to-day, without authorisation or guidance, the effect of sympathetic action has been to call out those who feel the impulse of solidarity most strongly, but not those who can be most helpful to the cause at stake. The sporadic sympathy strikes in England did nothing to help the Dublin workers: they were a fine, but a mistaken, manifestation of solidarity. This is not the place for a general discussion of the policy of the sympathetic strike; but it is relevant that the fact that it would mean disaster for the railwaymen, acting in isolation and depending on their own resources, to adopt such a policy, does not settle the question one way or the other. Those leaders who have passed from an exposure of the uselessness of sporadic sympathy strikes directly to the conclusion that all sympathetic action is futile, have at least stated more than they have proved.

CHAPTER VI.

The National Programme and the Non-Unionist Question

Unauthorised "one man" and "sympathetic strikes" were the chief features of railway history during 1913; during the early part of 1914 the reform of the 1911 conciliation scheme and the drafting of the new "all grades" programme engrossed the Union's attention. These two questions are, of course, closely allied, and both seem to have been raised throughout the discussion on the national programme at the 1914 Annual Conference of the N.U.R. This conference, which met at Swansea in June, 1914, passed unanimously a resolution endorsing the programme drawn up by the Executive Committee after the views of the branches had been invited and collected. Apart from the question of conciliation, the two chief items in the programme were a general eight-hour day and an advance of 5s. a week all round.

Though the resolution endorsing this programme was carried unanimously, this cannot be taken to mean that there was real agreement. In fact, it had really been settled in advance by the Executive, as Mr. Thomas admitted before the Conference opened in an article which he contributed to the "Manchester Guardian" (15/6/14). He there spoke of "it being generally assumed that the congress will formulate a new programme." "This," he wrote, "is entirely erroneous, inasmuch as the Executive Committee have already adopted the programme which has been made public; and whilst the Congress will probably express some opinion on the matter, it will only be, in my opinion, in the nature of endorsing it." It is clear, however, from the reports of the conference published in the "Daily Herald" (June 16-20, 1914) that there was considerable difference of opinion. Though these reports were unofficial, and in some respects very unfair, they seem to indicate the general lines of the discussion. On the question of the eight-hour day the conference was unanimous, and the only point in dispute on this matter was whether the programme should include the workers in railway engineering shops —a point the significance of which will be made clearer later on. Differences arose mainly on the demand for a 5s. advance all round, some of the delegates declaring their preference for the

alternative policy, rejected by the Executive, of a 30s. minimum. It is easy to appreciate the arguments for both policies. The advocates of the 30s. minimum held that sum to be the irreducible minimum "living wage," and maintained that the Union ought not to ask for less in the case of any grade of workers. With many workers getting no more than a pound a week, the alternative policy fell far short of satisfying these condition. It was advocated, and received official endorsement, because the new Union felt the need of appealing to all grades, particularly to the more highly paid. The N.U.R. Executive set out to design a programme that should both be simple and appeal to every grade, and this requirement the policy of the 30s. minimum did not seem to meet. As Mr. Bellamy said in his presidential address at the Conference,

"It is useless to attempt in a national movement a detailed programme for each grade. Such a course would defeat itself. The programme is at once simple and comprehensive. It includes all."

This may be taken to mean that the general programme must be simple, and that the detailed demands of each grade should take form rather before the various Conciliation Boards on the different railway systems. At the same time, the N.U.R. had to justify the principle of Industrial Unionism to each grade; and it had therefore to devise a comprehensive programme in which each grade could see some gain for itself. Hence the triumph of the policy of the 5s. advance all round. It was designed to prove to the locomotive section that their interests would not be neglected by an "all grades" Union.

A further resolution, carried unanimously at the Annual Meeting, must be mentioned here. It urged that "in the very near future a date shall be definitely fixed by the Executive Committee when instructions will be given to our members to discontinue working along with non-unionists." This forms no part of the programme; but it is clear that, with the rapid advance of the N.U.R. and the other railway Unions, the non-Unionist question cannot long be neglected. It is clear that the railwaymen will before long be in a position to secure a completely blackleg-proof organisation, at any rate upon the traffic side.

CHAPTER VII.

A New Conciliation Scheme

We may now pass to the far more difficult question of the termination or amendment of the 1911 Conciliation scheme, from which it is impossible to separate an account of the relations between the N.U.R. and the A.S.L.E. and F. We may begin with a short summary of the earlier relations of the A.S.L.E. and F. with the other railway Trade Unions.

In 1903 a scheme of Federation, approved at a Joint Conference between the old A.S.R.S. and the A.S.L.E. and F., came into force. It provided for the joint formulation of all programmes affecting locomotive men, either in isolation or along with other grades. A Joint Committee of the two Societies was set up to watch over such programmes, and joint sessions of the two Executives were to be held when it became necessary to consider a withdrawal of labour, and in any case annually, to lay down the general lines of policy. This scheme remained in force, not without friction, until 1906, when at last matters came to a head, partly on the question of the new national movement, but also on personal grounds. As far as the division was one of policy, it can be summed up thus: the A.S.L.E. and F. desired a national movement for locomotive men only, justifying this by the strength of the organisation among that particular section, and accusing the A.S.R.S. of standing in the way. The A.S.R.S., on the other hand, was formulating the "all grades" programme which was put forward in 1907: to this the A.S.L.E. and F. replied that "with the present state of organisation the very mention of an 'all grades' movement spells failure; for to hitch on the 10 per cent. (organised in other grades) to the 65 per cent. locomotivemen simply reduces the percentage of railwaymen organised to a minority."

The Federation then broke up, and the A.S.R.S. launched its "all grades" movement, which led to the Conciliation Scheme of 1907. To this scheme, concluded under the auspices of the Board of Trade, the A.S.L.E. and F. and the General Railway Workers' Union were signatories along with the A.S.R.S.; but the Federation was not renewed. The scheme led, however, to co-operation, if not to cordiality, and the four railway Unions, as we have seen,

stood side by side in the national strike of 1911, and, in common, signed the agreement of that year. We have also seen how, when fusion came to be discussed, the A.S.L.E. and F. refused to join hands with the other three Unions. Its reasons will appear more clearly in the discussion of the recent negotiations for a new scheme of Conciliation.

November, 1913, was the earliest date at which the specified year's notice could be given to terminate or revise the settlement of 1911. In October communications were already passing between the two Societies with a view to joint action, but these did not progress, and each acted independently. The N.U.R. secured that notice should be sent in by all the Conciliation Boards[1] of their desire to terminate the scheme, which would accordingly expire in December, 1914, and wrote to the Companies asking for a Conference. The A.S.L.E. and F. merely wrote to the Companies, intimating their desire to continue the scheme with certain amendments which they outlined. After some delay, the principal Companies appointed a special committee of seven Managers and wrote to both Societies, intimating their willingness to meet them jointly.

The importance of this step is obvious. Hitherto, the Companies had obstinately refused to recognise the Unions, and had only met their representatives under protest at the Board of Trade. Now they expressed their willingness for a joint conference apart from all "impartial" or political influences: in short, they conceded "recognition" in principle, though full and complete recognition was by no means granted.

Seeing that the Companies suggested a joint meeting, and asked the men to present a list of the amendments they desired in the 1911 scheme, the N.U.R. at once got in touch with the A.S.L.E. and F., and the two Executives met to try and arrive at a common policy. The chief points that had to be discussed were as follows

1. Recognition.

2. The scope of the new Conciliation Boards (i.e., should they be competent to discuss questions of discipline and management?).

3. The classes of workers to be included under the amended scheme (i.e., should the boards still be confined to "those engaged in the manipulation of traffic"?).

4. The abolition of deputations and petitions.

[1] With a few exceptions. The G.E.R. boards sent in notice of revision, and not of termination.

5. The composition of the boards (i.e., should they be composite or sectional?).

6. The question of the "impartial" Chairman (i.e., should the element of arbitration be retained or abolished?).

The first and last of these points were never discussed; but it is safe to say that they would have given rise to little difference of opinion between the Unions. Upon the second, third and fourth an agreement was reached. Upon the fifth the conference broke up, without getting to the stage of interviewing the railway Companies' representatives.

Let us begin with the points of agreement. The 1911 scheme, as we have seen, confined the operation of the Conciliation Boards to questions of wages, hours and conditions of labour, expressly excluding questions of discipline and management. The representatives of both Unions unanimously demanded the removal of this disability, and the granting to the boards of the right to deal with all questions that might arise between employer and employed. How important such a provision would be is clear from the extent to which the series of unauthorised "one-man" strikes to which we have referred has arisen in connection with questions now outside the scope of the Conciliation Boards.

The second point, too, is fairly simple, though it raises a wider question into which we shall have to go later. The 1911 scheme is confined to workers "engaged in the manipulation of traffic," a definition which has been applied in contradictory senses by different Companies. Thus, a class of men may find themselves included in the scheme on one line and excluded on another. The N.U.R., whose members are alone affected by the doubt, therefore suggested that the entry to the amended scheme should be open to any grade of railway employees that expressed a desire to come in. This was at first objected to on the ground that it would involve members of other Unions (A.S.E., Boilermakers, &c.) who ought first to be consulted; but when it was pointed out that the provision would be purely permissive, agreement was secured on this point also.

Nor was difficulty experienced over the question of petitions and deputations. According to the 1911 scheme, no question could be brought before a Conciliation Board until a petition, signed by 25 per cent. of the grade or grades affected, had been presented to the management, and until a deputation had thereafter waited upon the management to present its case. These restrictions were felt to be galling and unjust, and the mark of an inferior status. It was, therefore, agreed by both Societies that, while questions affecting individuals should, if possible, be settled without recourse to the Boards—here again recognition would come in—all general or grade questions should be sub-

mitted to the boards without any previous petition or deputation. "We have done with petitions and deputations," said a speaker at the joint meeting of the Executives.

Next we may take the questions which were left undiscussed when the joint conference broke up. It was not made clear what form the demand for recognition would be likely to take; but certainly both Unions would have agreed in demanding the right to negotiate directly with the Companies on questions of national importance or affecting a number of distinct railway systems, and equally certainly, in the event of the "impartial" Chairman being abolished, the recognition of their right to take over all questions which the boards might fail to settle by direct negotiation.

Though the question of abolishing the "impartial" Chairman never came up for discussion at the joint meeting, a good deal was said that bore indirectly upon it. In a word, the demand for his abolition means the substitution of negotiation for arbitration. The 1911 scheme is negotiation backed by arbitration. Where a Board disagrees, it must call in the Chairman to arbitrate, and his award is final. It is fairly clear that the N.U.R. desires the abolition of the Chairman, and the substitution of a system of pure negotiation, backed, not by arbitration, but by the threat of the strike. The attitude of the A.S.L.E. and F. is not so clear, and there seems to have been on this point some misunderstanding which could easily have been cleared up had the question ever been directly discussed. Mr. Hunter, of the A.S.L.E. and F., said at one point

"Now, the moment you sign your hand for a Conciliation scheme for the question of hours and wages, you honourably bind yourselves that on those questions you are prepared to go to an independent tribunal rather than go to strikes."

To this, Mr. Cramp, of the N.U.R., replied later in these words:

"But there are schemes of conciliation—miners, I believe, have them, and other people have them—which do not involve the abandonment of the right to strike, but do give the two parties some opportunity of coming together and discussing the point at issue."

Mr. Hunter, in fact, was confusing conciliation with arbitration—excusably, because the Government has learnt the art of labelling its arbitration schemes "Conciliation," in order to make them more palatable—whereas Mr. Cramp was pointing out the difference. Take away the "impartial" Chairman, and you have left regular machinery for direct negotiation, backed by the right to strike. Such seems to be the amended Conciliation scheme desired by the N.U.R.; but the A.S.L.E. and F., in the list of points which it submitted to the Companies, made no mention of abolishing the Chairman. It would perhaps be unfair

to conclude that it desires his retention; but the omission is curious.

I come lastly to the point on which the joint meeting of the two Executives broke up—the question of composite versus sectional boards. The A.S.L.E. and F. makes a categorical demand for a separate board on each railway for locomotive men: the N.U.R. stands for the principle of a single all grades board for each railway system. The division on this point seems, for the present, too great to be overcome, and there is considerable bitterness on both sides. In the discussions on the conciliation scheme the same differences arise as on the question of amalgamation, and the two problems may, therefore, be treated together. They are of sufficient importance to demand a separate chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

The N.U.R. and the Associated Society

THE Associated Society, we have seen, has a membership of about 33,000 in the three grades of drivers (including motormen), firemen, and cleaners. For these grades the N.U.R. also caters, and it claims to have an even larger number of locomotive men than the sectional Union. The N.U.R. figures, which have not been published, are disputed by the other side; but it is clear that the locomotive section is fairly evenly divided between the two Unions. The proportion of drivers to cleaners, however, cannot be given in either case: it would almost certainly be larger in the Associated Society. It is clear, then, that the locomotive section is extremely well organised, though the disparity between it and the other grades is not nearly so great as it used to be: there cannot be much less than 60,000 of the three locomotive grades organised, while the total number given as employed in the figures on page two of this report in only 76,362 or, excluding boys, 70,726.

With this by way of preface, we may proceed to state the case of the A.S.L.E. and F. against amalgamation, which is at the same time the greater part of their case against composite boards. It is possible to give this case fairly completely from the very able statements that have appeared in the Society's paper, the *Locomotive Journal,* and from the speeches of the leaders.

"Organise your trade, federate your industry," is, we have seen, the watchword of the Society, which has throughout urged upon the N.U.R. the desirability of federation and joint action as against complete fusion. Its arguments are based upon the distinctive position of locomotive men as a grade: it pleads the unusual responsibilities attaching to drivers and, in a less degree, to firemen; and it points out that, whereas in most grades it does not take a man long to reach the maximum standard of pay, it is many years before a locomotive man can arrive at that stage. Ignoring these facts, the other grades, it claims, are apt to consider only the apparently high wages received by the top men, and to forget the long service needed to qualify for them. On this point, it appeals to experience, particularly, as we shall see, on the North Eastern, and maintains that the other grades have tended to regard the locomotive men as overpaid, and to obstruct, or at least not to aid, their efforts for advances. It points to the stringent physical

and mental tests which locomotive men have to pass, and to their liability to failure of eyesight and to nervous diseases—all which, it says, are usually underestimated by other railwaymen and by outsiders. Moreover, it points out the extreme difficulty experienced by a driver who loses his job in getting another at anything like the same rate of pay, and urges that this makes the locomotive men naturally cautious in comparison with the lower-paid grades. This caution is exemplified in its rules, in accordance with which no withdrawal of labour may take place without the consent of four-fifths of the members employed on the railway system in question and of the Executive Committee. It has not, however, prevented A.S.L.E. and F. members from taking a prominent part in many of the recent unauthorised strikes. They express their desire to co-operate with the rest; but they insist on retaining their independence and the right to co-operate on their own terms. They appeal to their history as showing that they have never been unwilling to give every help to other grades, either in general movements or in particular cases of victimisation and the like.

To this the N.U.R. replies by admitting most of the facts, but denying the conclusions. It is admitted that the locomotive section is in a peculiar position in many respects; but this, it is urged, should not stand in the way of fusion. By sectionalising its Executive in the manner we have described, the N.U.R. has secured that there shall always be six locomotive men on its Executive, and, in point of fact, there are now seven, as the President is also a driver. Moreover, the six form a special locomotive Sub-Committee, in which the grade is able to formulate apart its own demands. Surely, the N.U.R. advocates argue, this is as much as a section can expect, and is an adequate safeguard for every just claim. It is true that the demands of the section have to be ratified by the whole "all grades" Executive; but, if they are carefully formulated in advance by a sectional committee and laid before the whole Executive by the qualified representatives of the section, surely justice will be done. To press the demand further is to assert the right of a single section to override the common good. Furthermore, the Associated Society can speak only for half the locomotive section: the other half are in the N.U.R. If, again, the locomotive men are cautious, because dismissal has more terrors for them than for other grades, is it not clear that they would be better able to resist oppression with the whole force of the railwaymen behind them in a single Union? Is it not clear, too, that amalgamation would increase their economic power when they demand better conditions of service? Moreover, the whole policy of the Companies in the past has been to set grade against grade, and this policy, which is encouraged by sectional organisation, is impossible with Industrial Unionism.

These are the main arguments on both sides, and they were repeated, with variations and additions, in the discussion on the constitution of the Conciliation Boards. We have seen that, while the N.U.R. desires one composite board for each railway, the A.S.L.E. and F. demands a sectional board for drivers, firemen, and cleaners alone. This statement is, however, somewhat misleading in its simplicity; for the actual positions reproduce exactly those which we have just been examining on the question of fusion. The demand of the Associated Society is clear; it stands for a sectional board for the grades it represents and rejects all interference by other sections with the negotiations on that board. It claims the support of other sections for its demands; but it refuses to be bound by their opinion, and, failing their support, it declares its readiness to act without them, relying on its own strength. In short, it wishes the Conciliation scheme to express the principle of Federation, and not that of Amalgamation.

It is in the case of the N.U.R. that misunderstanding has arisen and is likely to arise. It is the more important to make plain what the N.U.R. wants because it is clear that, in the Joint Conference, this was not at first understood by the members of the Associated Society. Just as the N.U.R. stands for the principle of a single Union for all railwaymen, it stands also for the principle of a single board for all grades. But, just as, within the single Union, it desires direct representation of each section upon the Executive, so it desires direct sectional representation upon the Conciliation Board. In addition, just as it has divided its own Executive into standing departmental sub-committees, it desires the division of the Composite Board into similar sub-committees. But at the same time it insists that, just as on the Union Executive the decisions of the sub-committees must be endorsed by the whole body, so the decisions of the sub-committees of the Conciliation Board shall come before the whole Board for ratification. The two positions are parallel throughout, and on both the cleavage of opinion is equally distinct.

Both sides appeal to history; and, as usual, they differ in the interpretation of the same facts. In the first place, appeal is made to the history of the Conciliation schemes of 1907 and 1911. The A.S.L.E. and F. point out that the 1907 scheme closely resembled the new proposal of the N.U.R., in that it provided for both sectional and composite boards. Its working was, they point out, unsatisfactory in the extreme to all classes of workers, and in 1911 the chief act of the Royal Commission, subsequently ratified by both Societies, was to sweep away the composite boards, while leaving the sectional boards intact. And it is admitted, they add, that the 1911 scheme is an improvement on that of 1907.

To this argument the N.U.R. has an obvious answer. In

the first place, the improvement since 1911 is due, in the main, not to the better scheme of conciliation, but to the increased economic power of the Trade Unions, which has caused the Companies to abandon, to some extent, the obstructive tactics which they had previously been pursuing. Secondly, the fact that the Royal Commission decided for sectional boards need not commend them to the workers. The object of the Commission was to meet an immediate grievance by speeding up the machinery, and this no doubt it achieved; but of the two ways of doing this that were open to it, it may well have chosen the wrong one from the workers' point of view. Nor is the new scheme in effect a revival of the old one. Apart from other amendments, such as the extension of scope and the abolition of the Chairman, the N.U.R. stands, not for two separate systems of boards, but for a single system. A sub-committee, meeting, say, immediately before the full board and reporting to it, cannot be used to delay proceedings as the old system could. Action will be as rapid as with a sectional board, and in addition it will be united action by the whole body of the men.

The second historical appeal of both Unions is to that great railway which stands outside both the 1907 and the 1911 scheme, but which has a separate conciliation agreement of its own. In its main features the North Eastern Railway scheme[1] resembles that of 1911, with the important difference that instead of sectional boards it is worked through a single composite board, called a "Conference." The members of this board are elected sectionally by the members of the various grades; but there is no express provision in the scheme for standing sectional sub-committees, such as the N.U.R. now advocates, though such sub-committees do in fact exist. "The board is divided into six groups. Each group has its separate sub-committee, thus proving that a composite board cannot work without sectionalism. The functions of these sub-committees are to prepare cases for the board to deal with" (*Locomotive Journal*). The men have in all 18 representatives, of whom four represent the locomotive staff, four the permanent way men, four the Goods Station staff, two the Passenger Station staff, two the guards and shunters, and two the signalmen. It is contended by the representatives of the A.S.L.E. and F. that this scheme has worked badly for the locomotive men, and that, in the agreement concluded in November, 1913, they were neglected and left in the lurch by the other grades. The composite board, it is contended, has meant the levelling down of the higher paid grades.

Mr. Hudson, of the N.U.R., who is the men's Secretary on the North Eastern board, replies to this argument with a direct

[1] For full text of the N.E.R. Conciliation Scheme, see Appendix D.

negative. "By the recent settlement," he says, "locomotive-men have got more than any other grades of the service."[1] The fact appears to be that, in return for the nine hours day and the considerable advances which they gained, the drivers were compelled to surrender certain privileges, including some bonuses and an old "servitude scale" of pay. Though there is plenty of unrest on the North Eastern, there are few signs that the discontent is greater among locomotive men than among other grades. The North Eastern scheme is, on the whole, the least objectionable that has yet been agreed upon; and, coupled with recognition of the Unions by the Company, it may be said to have worked well. One more feature in connection with it must be mentioned here. When a new wages and hours agreement for the North Eastern was drawn up in November, 1913, there was considerable anger in some quarters on the ground that the men had tied their hands up to 1916 by entering into a three years' agreement. This was not the case. The men could not apply for fresh advances under the scheme for a period of three years; but they could at any time terminate it altogether by giving six months' notice. Thus, while they were not free to join in a national programme for a 5s. advance or an eight hours' day under the scheme, they were free at any time, if they thought fit, to take part in a national movement for replacing it by a better scheme common to all railway systems.

. . . . . .

A few sentences more and we have done with the negotiations concerning a new Conciliation Scheme down to the outbreak of war. The attempts of the N.U.R. and the A.S.L.E. and F. to agree on a joint scheme with which to approach the Companies broke down in March, 1914. In April, on successive days, the two Executives met the Special Committee of the Companies separately, and thus took advantage of the offer of recognition which had been made to them. However, when the war broke out in August, nothing had been definitely settled; and the peace was secured by a purely temporary arrangement to tide over the emergency period. The division between the two Unions was left unhealed; indeed, events which happened soon after the March Conference and the separate meetings with the Companies only served to accentuate it.

[1] The full argument on both sides will be found in the report of the Joint Meeting of the two Executives.

CHAPTER IX.

The Conciliation Scheme During the War

The agreement reached on October 1st, 1914, provided that the existing schemes should continue in operation until six weeks' notice had been given on either side. So the position stood until twelve months later when the second war-bonus agreement[1] was negotiated. One of the conditions of that agreement was that the new scheme of conciliation should be ready whenever the time came that the companies might reconsider the war-bonus and give notice of their intention to pay it no longer. This notice could be given immediately the Government control of the railways ceased.

Upon this the Executive of the National Union of Railwaymen re-opened the question with the Railway Companies, and after protracted negotiations agreed with them upon the draft of a new Conciliation scheme. The Executive then summoned a Special General Meeting and submitted the scheme for final ratification. They were not bound to summon this meeting, but they did so in deference to a resolution which was passed at the Annual General Meeting in June, 1915, though this was not to come into operation till twelve months later. The resolution laid it down that no scheme could be finally agreed to until it had been approved by a General Meeting, and the Executive was clearly wise in following the spirit of it by calling such a meeting before attempting to conclude any new and binding settlement with the Companies. Indeed, the very fact that the conference resulted in the rejection of the scheme shows that the Executive was well advised to take a democratic course. The scheme as submitted followed in the main the lines of the 1911 agreement. The following are its chief points :—

(1) Sectional conciliation boards were retained, but the number of boards on each railway was limited to four.

(2) The exclusion from the scheme of "clerks, men engaged in supervisory duties, sworn police officers, hotel employees, seamen, dockmen, shopmen and artisans." It should be said that a conference of railway shopmen belonging to the

[1] See Chapter X.

National Union of Railwaymen, had instructed the Executive that they desired a system of shopmen's committees in place of coming under the Conciliation Boards.

(3) The impartial chairman was abolished. Two assessors were set up as arbitrators, one from each side: in case of disagreement these assessors could, if they agreed to do so, appoint an umpire whose decision would be final. This provision reserved to the men the right to strike should they think fit.

(4) The scheme was to run for three years in any case, and thereafter was to be terminable at twelve months' notice.

(5) Questions of discipline and management were still excluded. Men, however, were to be allowed to state their defence and call witnesses. When the case was not of a trivial character an appeal to a superior officer was to be allowed, and at this appeal the defendant could have an advocate, who might be either a fellow-worker in his own grade, or a headquarters official of a Railway Trade Union.

(6) In the 1911 scheme questions in dispute had first to be submitted by means of a petition signed by 25 per cent. of the grade affected. As an alternative, general applications could now be submitted by the secretary of the men's side of the Board if he could show that the application had been approved, as ascertained in open mass meetings in the railway centres, by not less than 25 per cent. of the men affected.

This scheme represented, no doubt, a distinct advance on that of 1911, but not nearly so great an advance as could have been expected from the increased strength of the railway unions in 1916. There can be little doubt that the companies took advantage of the fact that the railwaymen's hands were tied by the war, while the divided counsels of the National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen on the question of sectional boards added a considerable element of weakness. This was one of the several questions on which the Special General Meeting found the scheme unsatisfactory, and it was generally felt that the results were very meagre considering the present strength of the Union. After a prolonged examination, the scheme was rejected by 32 votes to 28.

It is perhaps regrettable that the course taken was that of submitting the scheme as a whole to a vote instead of taking the various points separately, and trying to arrive at an improved draft upon each point in turn, or at least to make quite clear wherein the proposed scheme was unsatisfactory. But, although this course was not taken, there is little doubt as to the points which weighed

most heavily in bringing about its rejection. The first of these, which was certainly of the greatest influence with the delegates, was the continued exclusion of certain grades which are partly embraced in the membership of the N.U.R. Despite the fact that the N.U.R. shopmen's conference recommended the system of shopmen's committees in preference to inclusion in the Conciliation Scheme, there was a very strong feeling among the members that what they wanted was an all-grades scheme applying to every section of their members. Next to this, two questions had most weight—the retention of sectional boards, which was inevitable in view of the attitude of the Locomotive Engineers, and the continued exclusion of questions of discipline and management from the scope of the Conciliation Boards. The new methods proposed for dealing with questions of discipline did indeed mean a real advance on the old position; but it seems unlikely that railwaymen will rest content with any scheme which does not give free scope to the Conciliation Boards in dealing with such questions.

The net result of the Special General Meeting was, then, the rejection of the proposed scheme, despite the extraordinarily clever exposition of it which was given by Mr. J. H. Thomas in the course of the discussions. As no instructions had been given to the Executive matters remained in this position until the Annual General Meeting at Bath three months later, when the Executive were instructed to resume negotiations on the following basis :—

> The Executive of the Union must conduct all negotiations of a national character direct with the railway companies.
>
> Grievances, in particular, to be dealt with by conciliation boards for each railway. These Conciliation Boards must include all wage-earning employees.

On this basis the Executive approached the Railway Companies and negotiations are still proceeding at the time of writing.

Whether the Railway Companies will agree to this basis remains to be seen, but it is clear that with the improved organisation of the National Union of Railwaymen, and the present temper of its members, no scheme is likely to be acceptable which proceeds on the narrow lines of that rejected in the spring of 1916.

CHAPTER X.

The Railways in War-Time

THE Railway Service was the first industry to be affected by the war. Immediately war was declared the railways were taken under Government control; a general Railway Executive was formed and all traffic was subordinated to military needs. The financial arrangement made by the Government was that the Railway Companies were assured the same profits as those of their last financial year. That is, if the receipts during the war fell below the 1913 level, the Government would make up the difference, and if the receipts were greater than before the Government would take the excess. The divisible net profits of the years before 1913 had averaged 48 million pounds, but in the year 1913, owing to the Railway Rates Act, by which the companies were enabled to increase their charges and so recoup themselves for the increase in wages resulting from the 1911 agitation, the profits had come to 52 millions. It was on the basis of these 52 millions, and not on the average of the previous four years' profits that the arrangement for control was made. As a result of the Government's generous terms the Railway Companies pocketed a large sum. In spite, however, of this generous basis of compensation for disturbance, Mr. Bonar Law, speaking in the House of Commons as Chancellor of the Exchequer on December 14, 1916, announced that the bargain had been a profitable one for the Government. "I have not been able," he said, "to get detailed figures; I do not suppose I should give them if I had, but I may say this, that up till now it has been a good financial transaction, and though the conditions have been changed, as the House knows, by the grant of a war bonus to the railway employees, I have every reason to believe, in spite of that, there will be no financial loss, but probably some financial gain, in consequence of the arrangement which has been made in regard to the railways." If this was true in 1916, how much the more true must it have become after the drastic increase of fares by 50 per cent. in January, 1917? There are obvious morals in relation to national ownership to be drawn from the experience of the railways during the war.

If the coming of war was favourable in its financial effects to

the Railway Companies, and if the State has made a saving on the operation of the railways during the war, there can be no doubt that the event reacted unfavourably on the railway workers. Under the Industrial Truce their unions abandoned their new programmes, and the men themselves presently found that the bad conditions that the programme had been designed to remedy were steadily worsened. Long hours, a depleted staff and increased accidents all told on the working life of the railwaymen. Add to this the steady rise in the cost of living, the necessity of continuing to negotiate under an out-worn scheme of conciliation, the menace of cheap female labour, the unequal operation of the Military Service Acts, and the adverse effect of the war on the railway worker becomes plain.

Meanwhile the National Union of Railwaymen's quarrel with the craft-unions became more embittered until, by the Trades Union Congress of September, 1915, it seemed likely to split Trade Unionism into two camps. On the other hand, as we shall see, the alliance with the Miners and the Transport Workers was confirmed and established. Internally there were certain developments in the constitution and in organisation. The membership continued to increase, but this increase was marred by the number of lapses. In 1915 alone there were 70,000 entries, but of these 40,000 subsequently lapsed.

It will now be necessary to consider the war-time history in detail. Some of it will be dealt with in this chapter, but where the war merely brought further developments of old problems, the matter is dealt with in other chapters under its appropriate heading.

It will be remembered that just before the outbreak of war the Swansea Annual General Meeting of the National Union of Railwaymen had accepted a National Programme of which one of the chief features was a demand for an immediate all-round increase in wages of 5s. The wages of railwaymen had always been low, but the rise in the cost of living in the years prior to the war had made the necessity for a change urgent. The Industrial Truce, with its one-sided effects, had meant the abandonment of this claim. But the Industrial Truce had been concluded on the tacit understanding that the railwaymen's standard of living, if it was not to be altered for the better, was certainly not to be altered for the worse. The last four months of 1914 were marked by a steady rise in food prices, and when it appeared that the Government was unlikely to do anything to check this rise, an agitation arose for an increase in wages. By the end of the first month of 1915, the railwaymen were seething with discontent, and accordingly the Executives of the National Union of Railwaymen, and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen took action and sent in to the Railway Companies a demand for an

all-round increase of 5s. to meet the changed conditions. At first it seemed as if the efforts of the two Executives would be fruitless, and the fairly large section of their members who felt that the Unions were over-reached by the Railway Companies in the terms of the Industrial Truce now began to press for direct action. If the wages demand was not conceded on this occasion it was suggested that there should be a strike, a suggestion which was instantly and ardently deprecated by Mr. J. H. Thomas and other Head Office officials. The Companies refused to grant the 5s. asked for, and at length, as from February 13, 1915, the Unions accepted the following terms :—

> That 3s. advance should be conceded to Railwaymen whose rate of wages was less than 30s. a week and 2s. to those above 30s.

As most of the running staff are paid much less than 30s. a week, the distinction between 2s. and 3s. is said to have given £20,000 more to the workers than an all-round increase of 2s. 6d. But, roughly speaking, the railwaymen obtained the half of what they asked for. Their demand had been no more than would meet a war-time rise in food prices of over 20 per cent., and the somewhat ready acceptance of the offer of the Railway Companies (for the Government, though it subsequently footed 75 per cent. of the increased wages bill, stood aloof from the negotiations) proved a stumbling block, not only to themselves later, but also at that time to other sections of the workers who were standing out for higher terms. Employers in other industries immediately took the extremely small advance secured by the railwaymen as the standard, and in this way the railwaymen's settlement had a more depressing effect on wages movements generally than could have been imagined by those who carried through the negotiations.

Another matter in which this settlement became a standard was that the railwaymen received their advance as a "war-bonus" and not as permanent increase in rates of wages. From this time forward there was never a question of a direct rise : all further negotiations were for an increase of "bonus" and, of course, all overtime rates and extra money were still calculated on the pre-war rates of wages. On these grounds, that the advance was too low, and that it was in the form of a "war-bonus," the railwaymen's Unions were subjected to much criticism, both at the time and afterwards. The railwaymen had to accept a bonus instead of a wage advance because, under the conciliation scheme, wage advances had to be negotiated separately for each company. Rightly, they preferred a national advance in the form of a bonus to sectional negotiations with each company.

It should be noted that the war-bonus applied principally to the running staff, and at first only on certain railways. It did not at the moment include boys under 18, who were not conceded their 1s. 6d. bonus until four months later. In some of the more important Companies the terms were extended to shopmen, but this was not universal; while it at first seemed as if the Scottish Companies would stand out against any advance the cost of which was not to be wholly borne by the Government. In this case, however, the resistance was not prolonged. The clerical staff was not at first included in the bonus arrangement, but it was extended to that section three or four weeks' later "as a practical answer" to the demand put forward by the Railway Clerks' Association for an increase of 25 per cent. in clerical rates of pay. Subsequent improvements in the war-bonus were similarly extended to the clerical staff in response to the R.C.A. agitations for percentage increases in rates of pay.

A significant feature of the agreement was that the negotiations were conducted directly between the Unions and the Railway Companies. Thus a further step towards full recognition was made. But it must be remembered that the spring of 1915 saw a general national recognition of Trade Unions, and of this the railwaymen's negotiation was only a particular instance.

From March onwards there was a growing agitation for an increase in the war-bonus, until by September, when the rise in food prices was more than 37 per cent. above the level of July, 1914, the Executives were compelled to speed up the negotiations which had been proceeding slowly with the Railway Companies. These, of course, aimed at delaying a settlement as long as possible. The feeling of dissatisfaction which had prevailed amongst the men because of the inadequacy of the first war-bonus now turned into a definite mood of revolt. Resolutions from various localities, notably South Wales, poured in to the Executives of the National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen threatening strikes if an immediate settlement was not secured. The officials of the Unions, pressed from behind by their members and met in front by the uncompromising attitude of the Railway Companies, endeavoured to hold back the men on the one hand and on the other to push forward a rapid settlement. How near matters came to a strike is shown by the notes in the *Times* on the "Railway Unrest," and more particularly, by a speech delivered by Mr. J. H. Thomas on September 5, in which he said :—

> "They had in the railway world reached a very dangerous stage. Never within the experience of the society was there such a united and determined demand for an improvement in the men's conditions as now. He was giving no secret away

in saying that when the Executive Committee met next week they would be faced with such a demand as they never had before. But there was a right way and a wrong way of doing things. But there was inside the movement another and cleverly engineered movement. Shortly, the demand was that unless the Executive Committee did a certain thing at a certain time the law would be taken into the men's own hands and they would do all manner of things themselves. Anyone who held that view had no right to be inside the organisation. If anarchy were introduced disaster must inevitably follow. The Executive Committee must control. The power of the strike must not be prostituted even in normal times, and to talk lightly of using it at this moment of the nation's history would not only be folly, but madness on the part of whoever uttered such a threat."

Ten days later the Executive of the National Union of Railwaymen issued the following resolution :—

"That this committee having entered into negotiations with the railway companies for increased remuneration, and as the negotiations are still proceeding, instructs the General Secretary to immediately communicate these facts to all our branches, and to impress upon our members the imperative importance that no action should be taken by any section of our members that would imperil the prospects of success."

The twofold policy pursued by the officials of the Unions appears to have been successful, for no strike took place and eventually about the middle of October an agreement was made with the Companies. By this agreement the railwaymen whose standard rate was under 30s. were to receive an additional bonus of 3s., those whose rate was over 30s. a bonus of 2s., while boys under 18 were to get another shilling. The agreement was to last as long as the Government control of the railways, and therefore was subject to be determined by one month's notice on either side. During the period of the agreement the National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen were not to put forward any fresh demands, nor to countenance any demand on the part of any of their members to reopen the settlement, nor to support any strike made in furtherance of such a demand.

This settlement was received with mixed satisfaction by the rank and file. The *Railway Review* devoted three issues to a series of articles defending the action of the Executives. But amongst the members, although the advance was appreciated, there were plenty who held that the Executives had abandoned

democratic principles in tying down their societies for the remainder of the war period. The growth of this feeling was undoubted, and in 1916 we find no inconsiderable part of the speeches of Mr. Thomas and other members of the Executive given over to a defence of what was attacked as "the officialism" of the "platform." This, no doubt, had much to do with the revision of rules in the autumn of 1916, by which the Executive's power of final decision was taken away from it and given to the Delegate Meeting.

The agreement of October, 1915, added some 17 per cent. to the pre-war average of wages of the railway worker, while at the same time the whole cost of living stood at 33 per cent. above the level of July, 1914. It may therefore be surmised that had no further change taken place the railwaymen would not have long remained contented with this position. But during the winter of 1915-16 prices rose steadily until, by July, 1916, food prices had reached 65 per cent. above July, 1914. Throughout this rise in prices the Trade Unions, and more particularly the War Emergency: Workers' National Committee, had insisted that profiteering was a determining factor, and had made continual representations to the Government to take over control of the supply of food and other necessaries. The Government, however, did little or nothing. From June, 1916 onwards important meetings were held in all the larger railway centres demanding that the Government should step in, and preferring a demand of 10s. in wages should the Government remain inactive. At the beginning of August the Executive of the National Union of Railwaymen asked for an interview with Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, on the subject of food prices. The request was refused and accordingly the demand for 10s. advance in wages (not war-bonus) was sent in to the Railway Companies. In taking this step the railway executives were going flatly against the letter of the 1915 agreement by which they had bound themselves not to put forward any further demands during the war period. Mr. Thomas endeavoured to put the Unions technically in the right by quoting a statement alleged to have been made conversationally by the railway managers at the time of the agreement, to the effect that changed circumstances would alter the case. But there was really no need to labour an apology for the action of the Unions. Everyone recognised, even in the anti-Labour press, that the agreement, being obviously unfair, ought to be treated as a dead letter.

The Railway Companies, to begin with, adopted the usual delaying tactics by making no response for a month. This deliberate inaction, combined with a sudden rise in prices of 6 per cent. in the month of August, only served to swell the irritation amongst the Railwaymen, and at the beginning of Sep-

tember the South Wales District of the Union, representing 20,000 men, gave notice that they would strike on the 17th of the month if by then the 10s. had not been conceded. On this the Railway Companies met the men on the 13th, and offered the Railwaymen a choice of alternatives—3s. to the grades covered by the Conciliation Scheme or arbitration. The Railway Executives chose neither, and reiterated their demand for 10s. The crisis had now become acute, and the 17th of the month, the date of the threatened strike in South Wales, was rapidly approaching. The Board of Trade then intervened and managed to secure a further meeting of the parties concerned. But nothing came of it. Every possible means, including the personal prestige of Sir William Robertson, was now employed to prevent a strike on the South Wales railways. At the request of Sir William Robertson Mr. J. H. Thomas went to South Wales, and there, with great difficulty, secured a suspension of the threatened strike.

After this, on September 20th, an agreement was at last reached by which the bonus, as it then stood, was doubled, the railwaymen receiving an additional 5s. and boys an additional 2s. 6d. Thus the men had again been forced to accept half their asking, and also to accept it in the form of war bonus and not as a permanent wages advance. The *Manchester Guardian,* in a review of the position about the middle of September, pointed out that the various bonuses had so far failed to make good the loss suffered by the men owing to rising prices.

> "An increase of 10s. a week now would represent, with the existing bonus, an increase of 50 per cent. above the previous rate of wages, but the increase in the cost of living to-day above the pre-war standard is about 54 per cent. The concession in full of the men's demand (waiving the distinction between bonuses and wages), would, therefore, not quite put the men in the position they held before the war, while there is every prospect of the cost of living rising still higher."

The cost of living did rise until, by the end of the year, it stood at over 66 per cent. above pre-war prices; but the railwaymen had still only increased their pay by 33⅓ per cent.

[At the beginning of April, 1917, a further bonus was given of 5s. for men, 2s. 6d. for boys, 3s. for women, and 1s. 3d. for girls. The total bonus then stood at 15s. for men, 7s. 6d. for boys and women, and 3s. 9d. for girls. This meant that wages reached 50 per cent. above pre-war level: but meantime food prices in large towns had risen to more than 100 per cent. above the level of July, 1914.]

CHAPTER XI.

The Irish Railways

Railway Trade Unionism has always found Ireland an unfavourable soil for growth. Before the war only one in ten Irish railwaymen was a Trade Unionist. This lack of organisation is reflected in the unsatisfactory conditions of the Irish railway workers. Wages are low, hours are long, and the only method for redress of grievance is the obsolete conciliation scheme of 1907. This is still in force, largely owing to the fact that the Irish Companies were left out of the Railway and Canal Traffic Rates Act of 1913, which gave the companies in Great Britain power to increase rates. "Recognition" has always been more remote than in England, and it is perhaps needless to say that the powers of the companies over discipline and management are entirely unrestricted.

One result of this has been that negotiations with Irish railways have always had to be carried on separately. This has applied to war-time also. When the 3s. and 2s. War Bonus Agreement of February, 1915, had been concluded with the British Railways, the Irish Railway Companies were asked (March, 1915) to fall in with it. They refused, and gave as their reasons first that the Government had not assumed control of the Irish railways, and that there was therefore no possibility of the companies recouping themselves for an increased wages bill, and secondly, that the rise in the cost of living had only affected Ireland in a slight degree and that, in so far as it had, it was met by the small war bonuses already granted. The second argument was scarcely valid: the rise in the cost of living varied, of course, from district to district, but in the main hit Ireland as hard as England, and the war bonuses had been given only by a few Irish railways. In any case, the war bonuses were very small, varying from 1s. to 2s. in the most favoured case. There was more in the first contention, and accordingly, in May, 1915, after a meeting of the National Union of Railwaymen with certain companies—Irish railway organisation is so little coherent that the railwaymen never managed to meet all the companies, or even all the chief companies, together—it was agreed that both sides should approach the Board of Trade. Nothing came of these meetings with the Board of Trade, and from this time onward the railwaymen were beating their heads against a brick wall. The Irish Railway Companies

referred them to the Government and the Government threw them back on the Companies. After the October revision of the war bonus, a further attempt was made to negotiate, but the Companies refused even to meet the officials of the National Union of Railwaymen. As the cost of living rose steadily the Irish branches of the National Union of Railwaymen became more and more disquieted, and a strong feeling arose that the headquarters officials were to blame. Motions were put on the Agenda of the Annual General Meeting of June, 1916, censuring Messrs. J. E. Williams and J. H. Thomas. In the discussion on the Irish railwaymen's bonus Mr. Thomas retorted that the real fault lay in the imperfect organisation of the Irish railwaymen, and there is no doubt that the ideal method of obtaining the Irish bonus was to make the Irish railways blackleg proof. This, however, was still far off. The Executive was instructed at this Annual General Meeting to use the full force of the Union to obtain the bonus for the Irishmen. Presumably this meant that if other means failed recourse should be had to a strike, a policy from which the Executive shrank. What the Executive was not prepared to do was done unofficially, after some further months of waiting.

On a number of Irish railway systems strike notices were handed in to take effect on December 17th, 1916. The matter was now brought to a head.

Mr. John Redmond was brought into consultation, and in the House of Commons questions were asked by him, and in other ways he urged the Government to take over full control. Eventually, on the day fixed for the strike the Government announced that the Irish railways had been taken over by the Government on the same terms as those given to the railways in Great Britain. A war bonus was then given, but of only 3s. This, added to previous grants, made a total of 7s. Discontent has been prevalent since, and a demand for a further bonus may be expected shortly.

The part played by the Government as controller of railways in relation to the wages and conditions of the railway servants was not creditable, and particularly so in the case of the Irish railways. Throughout the Government played a game of Spenlow and Jorkins. Railwaymen put forward a demand, the Government took refuge behind the forbidding aspect of the Railway Companies, and when, after the long wearisome negotiations the Railway Companies and the Railway Unions arrived at a deadlock, it always turned out that the matter could be solved by a decision of the Board of Trade.

It may be that this tortuous method of dealing with Labour was resorted to in order that the Government might only assume the minimum of responsibility with the assumption of control. But, whatever the motive, the effect was an ungenerous treatment of the railway workers.

During the period under review, the question of methods of

organisation in Ireland has given rise to a considerable amount of discussion. There is discontent among the Irish railwaymen, and this has found expression in demands for autonomy within the Union. The Irishmen want, not a separate Union, but an Irish Council with considerable power of initiating and conducting movements, and this, or something like it, they will probably have to receive, despite the difficulties involved in the proposal.

[1] The additional bonus of April, 1917 (see page 58) was also extended to Irish railwaymen. This made the total Irish bonus 12s. for men, 6s. for lads, 6s. for women, and 3s. for girls, leaving differences of 3s., 1s. 6d. and 9d. between them and the railway workers in Great Britain.

CHAPTER XII.

Women on the Railways

Prior to 1914 the employment of women in the railway industry was too small to make it a question of importance to the railwaymen's organisations. The 1911 Census showed that there were 3,787 women in the industry in England and Wales, mostly confined to certain grades, such as clerks, ticket examiners, collectors, &c.; and, while this number had trebled by 1914, it had not yet reached two per cent. of the total number employed. The effect of the war enlistments was a rapid increase which was not limited to the grades in which they had previously been employed. From the spring of 1915 onwards the Railway Companies began to employ women on a large scale as clerks, booking clerks, ticket collectors, carriage cleaners, portresses, and to a certain extent as engine cleaners—even in a few instances as stationmasters. This increase in female labour was first brought prominently before the attention of the members at the Annual General Meeting of June, 1915, when 25 branches appealed to have the rules interpreted so as to admit women to the union. After some verbal disputation as to whether the term "railwaymen" could possibly include the female sex, the admission of women was carried by 33 to 23. Mr. Albert Bellamy, in his presidential address, referred to the problem of female labour and stated that it must be without prejudice to the return of men in the army, and must not be paid at less than the men's rates.

During July a meeting was held with the railway managers, when the National Union of Railwaymen asked for the employment of women to be without prejudice (1) to the general question of women's labour on the railways, (2) to any undertakings given by the companies as to the re-employment of men in the army.

This was agreed to. To the further proposals that they should have the minimum rate of the grade on which they were working, and that their employment should be declared an emergency provision for the duration of the war the managers refused to accede. The Board of Trade was then approached and informed that any provision which did not declare the employment of women to be purely temporary would not be an adequate safeguard, and that the refusal to pay the minimum rates would be regarded as a breach of the truce of October 1st, 1914.

The Board of Trade failing to understand that the matter was serious, merely offered to arrange another meeting with the managers, who, it was stated, would only speak for their own railways. This would have been useless and a waste of time, and accordingly a special meeting of the Executive Council was summoned on July 31st, at which a resolution was passed

> "to inform the Government that we take such a serious view of the matter that unless we are able to get the guarantees asked for we shall have no alternative but to cancel the truce."

It was arranged to give notice to cancel the truce unless a satisfactory answer was received in 14 days. On the 13th day Sir Sam Fay, speaking for ten of the principal railways, agreed to the minimum rates for women in the grades in which they had not been previously employed, and at the same time the Board of Trade intimated that it was prepared to "deal" with any Company which did not fall in with this arrangement. So much was satisfactory, but it should be noted that the terms of the railway managers' concession only referred to grades in which women had entered since the outbreak of war and that the temporary nature of their employment was not assured.

That the National Union of Railwaymen at that time held that their employment must be temporary is shown by an Executive decision confining the financial membership of women to Scale D., which does not provide unemployment benefit. Ten months later, however, we find Mr. J. H. Thomas saying that it must be recognised that the women had come to stay, and concomitantly that they must therefore receive equal pay for equal work. This was no doubt due to the increased war bonus which made the minimum rate of the grade (the woman's pay) four shillings below the men's weekly income. A demand for the application of the war bonus to women was sent to the Great Western Railway in April, 1916. The Great Western refused to grant this, and they were supported in this by the Award of the Committee on Production, to whom the case was referred for arbitration. The matter came up again after the men's settlement for the additional five shillings in September, and the women were given a bonus of 3s., to take effect from the same date as the increased bonus to men.

The organisation of women in the National Union of Railwaymen proceeded rapidly from the date of their definite admission to membership. During the winter of 1915-16 it was found that in some cases railway officials were doing their best to prevent trade unionists from organising the women. This caused a considerable feeling of irritation and a natural suspicion that the motive of such

an action lay in a desire to have a supply of non-unionists ready, if need be, to blackleg. The women, however, often proved to be more susceptible to organisation than had been thought likely, and their nascent trade unionism was proved in April, 1916, by a strike of woman carriage cleaners at Old Oak Common. Seven women employed at this station came out together, and their action led to the Executive's demand to the Great Western for a bonus, to which we have already referred. A question of the limits of organisation which arose at this time between the National Federation of Women Workers and the National Union of Railwaymen was settled by an Executive decision that where women in the employ of the Railway Companies were wholly engaged on munitions they should not be eligible for membership,[1] but that they should be eligible when they were employed alternatively on munitions and railway work.

A lively interest in the organisation of women, partly born of solidarity and partly of apprehension, has characterised the National Union of Railwaymen members from the beginning, and therefore, in spite of the unsatisfactory assurances of the Railway Managers as to the emergency nature of women's employment, there seems no reason to fear that their entry into this industry will result in any permanent lowering of the railwaymen's rates and standards.

[1] The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen has been comparatively little affected by the employment of women. There are about 1,000 women engine cleaners, but no drivers or firemen amongst women. A number of women cleaners have applied for membership; but the Society has refused to admit them on the ground that the work is not suitable for women. The question of the female clerical staff is dealt with in the chapter on the Railway Clerks' Association.

CHAPTER XIII.

Military Service

During the first year of the war large numbers of railwaymen enlisted, and, by the beginning of the second year of war 80,000 were in the army. As a result, the Railway staff was depleted, and for a time the recruiting officers were instructed to "go slow" in the case of railway workers. To the conscription agitation the National Union of Railwaymen adopted an attitude of uncompromising hostility, and at the Special Trade Union Congress of January 6th, 1916, their strongly-worded motion on the subject defeated the far "milder" resolution put forward by the platform.

The story of how and why this resolution proved fruitless cannot be told here. It is sufficient to say that the policy of the Union was declared again and again by the Executive, and was approved almost unanimously by the Bath Annual General Meeting.

During the debates on the second Military Service Act it was solemnly promised by the Government that there would be no danger of industrial conscription, and as a safeguard against it a clause was inserted by which occupation and not employment was made the basis of exemption—i.e., a man might be taken from an occupation, but no employer could "release" a man for military service. Scarcely had the Military Service Act come into operation when this provision was violated. Not the Railway Executive Committee, but each Railway Company was given power to claim or not to claim exemption for its employees. "Men are to be treated as in a certified occupation in respect of whom the Railway Company have furnished to the Recruiting Officer of the area in which the man resides a certificate stating that he is indispensable to the Company." This was industrial conscription with a vengeance, and the immediate effect was that men who because of their Trade Union activity were obnoxious to railway officials began to be released in preference to younger men. Before the end of March, 1916, under the first Military Service Act, Mr. Thomas quoted an example in the House of Commons of a Scottish member of the N.U.R. Executive who was said by a Company to be so indispensable that they could not give him leave to attend an Executive meeting. Immediately after his return he was called up for military service, whereupon the Company stated he was not indispensable. The result was that railwaymen in Scotland were persuaded that it was a case of victimisation. Other cases followed

this, and it soon became clear that victimisation was taking place on a large scale.

There was a tendency to discriminate against conscientious objectors and unattested men, but in the main the victims were those who had been active in trade unionism. The railway unions contended that release of men for the army should be conducted on the principle that in each grade the junior men should be the first to go. This principle seems never to have been adopted by the Companies and, eventually, after much negotiation with the Board of Trade and persistent agitation in Parliament, the Board of Trade offered to set up a Joint Committee of the Railway Companies and the Unions, on the lines of the special mining tribunals, to determine matters relating to the release of railwaymen for military service. This was accepted by the Railway Unions in June, but the Companies boggled at the notion and finally refused to have anything to do with it. Meantime for a period of six months the railwaymen were open to the perils of industrial tyranny. Instances multiplied of men of fifteen years' service being taken and others in the same grade being retained whose service had not lasted for the same number of months. At last the Board of Trade appointed a small independent committee of three persons (one to be Labour) to hear complaints. They were to inquire into cases in which, after appeal to the general manager of the railway company concerned, it was alleged that the instructions of the Railway Executive Committee regarding release of railwaymen had not been followed. The instructions referred to laid down the principle that unmarried men should be spared first and seniority should apply.

So far this was satisfactory, but in practice it was found that while the danger of victimisation was limited it was not wholly removed. As late as January, 1917, there was a tribunal decision of a case on the North Eastern Railway, in which a prominent member of the men's side of the Conciliation Board was declared to be dispensable, but was not allowed to leave the service of the North Eastern. This case was discussed at a Conference of the North-East Federation of District Councils, and it was clear that, while it was difficult to prove victimisation in the legal sense, all the delegates were convinced of the fact. At this same conference further instances of victimisation were given, and a resolution was carried asking the Executive of the N.U.R. to press for a separate tribunal for each railway to consist of equal numbers of railwaymen and railway officials to consider all cases of liberation and substitution.

The N.U.R., then, has had ample experience of the working of conscription on its industrial side, and their experience is only likely to confirm them in their opposition to a system which places the strongest possible weapon in the hands of the employer, and makes Trade Union action dangerous and difficult for the worker.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Triple Industrial Alliance

DURING the earlier months of 1914 negotiations were on foot for the formation of an alliance for fighting purposes between the N.U.R. and other big unions. In October, 1913, a resolution had been passed at the Miners' Annual Conference at Scarborough requesting the Executive of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain "to approach the Executive Committees of *other big trade unions* with a view to co-operative action and the support of each others' demands" (italics mine). In accordance with this resolution the Miners' Executive decided to approach the National Union of Railwaymen and the National Transport Workers' Federation and "to content themselves in the first place by endeavouring to get a joint meeting of these three bodies at least in the initial stage."[1]

The reason for this industrial alliance was the partial failure of the great strikes of 1911 and 1912, on railways, docks and mines. Striking separately and at different times, the industries not only lost the force of a united effort, but also harmed one another. On grounds of economy alone it would have benefited the workers to strike together. For while a coal strike in time disorganises industry as a whole, it has an immediate effect on railwaymen. The Railwaymen's own strike of 1911 cost them £45,000 for three days, but the Coal Miners' six weeks' strike in 1912 cost the N.U.R. £94,000. In the same way a railway strike at once affects the Miners and the Dockers; thus in the Driver James case the 1,500 railwaymen who struck were able to throw 29,000 miners and 3,000 dockers out of work. Again, a dock strike affects both the Railways and the Mines which produce coal for transport by water. The move for closer working was therefore dictated in the first instance by a desire to secure that national movements should take place simultaneously in all three industries, that the expense and the dislocation should be reduced and that the movements should be successful.

There were, however, other considerations which urged the need for closer co-operation. One was a consciousness of the growing solidarity of capital. It was felt that capital was now

[1] Mr. Robert Smillie, President of the M.F.G.B., at the joint meeting of the three Executives, April 23rd, 1914.

organising clearly and deliberately for the purpose of attack or defence against the trade union movement, and that this danger could only be met by counter organisation. At the time the alliance was first mooted this feeling was strengthened by the South African deportations and the Dublin strike. Besides this, it was known that the mere threat of a strike of these three organisations would be likely to accomplish more than a full national strike of any one of them. It was realised, too, that such an alliance would have potent influence on the general solidarity of labour.

Thus, while a joint programme and common action was welcomed on the obvious grounds of economy and efficiency, the Executives of the three unions knew perfectly well that their alliance would go far beyond its declared objects in its general influence on both Capital and Labour.

After the first three conferences of the three Executives in April, 1914, a sub-committee was appointed to draw up a scheme. This was submitted to a further conference in June, but the terms of the alliance were not yet settled when the war broke out. The war deferred consideration of the matter for over a year, but in the interval the project was given the unanimous support of the Annual General Meetings of the three organisations. The Miners' Conference took exception to one Clause in the schemes by which it appeared that a joint national strike might possibly be called by the three Executives on their own responsibility. For this the Miners wished to substitute a rule that no strike could be called until a members' ballot had been taken. To this the Railwaymen and the Transport Workers demurred on the ground that the delay caused by a ballot vote in their case would be so great as to endanger the success of a strike. The Railwaymen further pointed out that whereas the Miners were bound by their rules to take a strike ballot, the N.U.R. was not so bound. Eventually, after considerable discussion a compromise was agreed upon, and the scheme was finally ratified on December 9th, 1915. The following is the scheme :—

(1) That matters submitted to this joint body, and upon which action may be taken, should be those of a national character or vitally affecting a principle which in the opinion of the Executive making the request necessitates combined action.

(2) The co-operation of the joint organisation shall not be called upon nor expected unless and until the matter in dispute has been considered by and received the endorsement of the National Executive of the organisation primarily concerned, and each organisation instituting a movement which is likely to involve the other affiliated organisations shall, before any definite steps are taken, submit the whole matter to the joint body for consideration.

(3) For the purposes of increasing the efficiency of the movement for combined action periodical meetings of the three full Executives shall be held at least half-yearly.

(4) There shall be appointed a Consultative Committee of six, composed of two members chosen from the Executive Committee of each of the three bodies, whose duty it shall be to meet from time to time, and who shall be empowered to call at any time a special conference of the Executives of the three bodies if in their opinion such conference be necessary. That a meeting be called on application made by any one of the three bodies.

(5) With a view to meeting all management expenses incurred, each affiliated body shall contribute a sum of 10s. per 1,000 members per annum, or such sum as may be decided upon from time to time.

(6) Simultaneously with these arrangements for united action between the three organisations in question every effort shall proceed among the three sections to create effective and complete control of their respective bodies.

(7) Complete autonomy shall be reserved to any one of the three bodies affiliated to take action on their own behalf.

(8) That joint action can only be taken when the question at issue has been before the members of the three organisations and decided by such methods as the constitution of each organisation provides, and the conference shall then be called without delay to consider and decide the question of taking action.

(9) No obligation shall devolve upon any one of the three bodies to take joint action unless the foregoing conditions have been complied with.

It was decided that the Presidents and Secretaries of the three organisations should form the sub-committee provided for in the rules. The officers of the new alliance are Robert Smillie, Chairman; Harry Gosling, Vice-Chairman; J. H. Thomas, M.P., Treasurer; and Thomas Ashton, Secretary.

The alliance, it will be seen, includes nearly all the workers in the Transport industry, but it does not include all who work at mines or on railways. When the proposal was first brought forward, neither the Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, nor the Railway Clerks' Association, who, however, having no strike policy, would not themselves have desired inclusion, nor the craft unions with members in railway shops, nor the various unions of colliery mechanics, enginemen, deputies, &c., were approached by the miners. This apparent exclusiveness at once produced a

storm, and when the three Executives met in April to discuss the scheme, an emissary, who was no less a person than the acting Secretary of the A.S.L.E. and F., appeared and claimed admission as the delegate of the National Federation of Enginemen, which includes the A.S.L.E. and F. with its 33,000 members on the railways, and other unions with 26,000 colliery enginemen and stokers among their members. Mr. Moore was not permitted to be present at the Conference, and the opinion was expressed that the way lay open for other colliery workers and enginemen to come in through the Miners' Federation or the N.U.R. In short, the Conference decided that each industry must be represented by one body, and refused to admit sectional representatives as such.

At the Conference in June, 1914, this matter was raised again by one of the representatives of the Transport Workers, who pointed out the necessity for having the colliery and the railway enginemen with them in any strike in view of the strategic position held by their grades. The chairman, while admitting this and affirming the desire of the Conference for having everyone in the industry linked up for the purpose of joint movements, showed that once the alliance went beyond the three most important bodies and began to admit every organisation connected with the industry it would be hard to know when to stop. He suggested, however, that it might be made possible for some of the craft unions to affiliate with the N.U.R. or the M.F.G.B. for this purpose only. Eventually the matter was remitted for the sub-committee of the three Presidents and the three Secretaries: the sub-committee reported in December, 1915, that they had thought it would be better for the alliance to be ratified first between the three main bodies, and that extension to other trades or unions could be considered afterwards. That the alliance is necessarily limited to the three original organisations cannot be considered a fair statement. The move began with an instruction from the Miners' Conference to their Executive to co-operate with other big unions, and as a matter of fact the extension of the alliance to the cotton operatives was more than once mentioned. The enginemen, however, took the exclusion, temporary or permanent, very much to heart, and at the 1914 Annual Conference of the National Federation of Enginemen the decision of the first Triple Alliance Conference was angrily discussed, and significant statements made by the General Secretary, who said that, since the Triple Alliance refused to recognise the National Federation of Enginemen "as an independent and separate body," the locomotive interest on the railways and the enginemen in the mining industry would feel under no obligation to co-operate in any national movement. "It seems to me," he said, "that the N.U.R. realise that in this joint movement,—under cover of the Miners' Federation and the Transport Union—they can see a chance of bringing the same position into

existence as the Miners' Federation desire, and of saying that all men on and about railways must be in the N.U.R. From the outset our Federation must go forward with a determination that we will not accept these terms." Finally, after several hot speeches from members of the A.S.L.E. and F., the following resolution was carried:

> "This Federation fails to see why the joint conference of miners, railway workers, and transport workers cannot see their way clear to agree that the railway interests and mining interests represented by this Federation will have direct representation and recognition in the counsels and objects of that joint body. It resolves that under no circumstances can it agree that we should seek representation through the National Union of Railwaymen or through the Miners' Federation, and it reserves to itself the right to determine its own course in the event of any position arising which requires action being taken by the men represented by this Federation."

The Triple Industrial Alliance, as we have seen, was intended to ensure joint programmes and common action on such matters as might lead to a strike. But hardly had it been formed when it found itself irresistibly impelled to joint consultation on matters of common interest when no strike was at all likely. It began to realise the power given it by the mere weight of its numbers. At the beginning of 1914 the M.F.G.B. membership was given as 800,000, the Transport Workers as 250,000, and the N.U.R. as 300,000, being 1,350,000 in all. Enlistment has obscured the present figures, but some of the constituent bodies have had large increases in the meantime, and the total membership of the alliance, counting members on service, can now be reckoned at about a million and a half. Thus it is nearly twice as large as the General Federation of Trade Unions, which has hitherto held the position as chief federal body in the Labour movement; the Trades Union Congress with a much larger membership than either, being as yet nothing more than, as its name implies, an annual congress. The result has been that the Triple Alliance has already begun to meet and shape policies on questions of general interest to Labour, while the suggestion has been made that it should try to "ginger up" the slow moving forces of the Trades Union Congress.

The first full meeting of the Alliance, held towards the end of April, 1916, dealt with the general policy of the Alliance in regard to after-war problems. It was decided to press for full restoration of Trade Union rules and regulations, for demobilisation, not by military units, but by industries, and for full maintenance by the State for discharged soldiers, munition workers, and all men

and women employed during the war as substitutes. Machinery for carrying this out was also suggested, and it was agreed to send a deputation to Mr. Asquith, Earl Kitchener, and Mr. Runciman, then President of the Board of Trade. This deputation, which was received after long delay, was made the occasion of a violent attack upon the Triple Alliance by the "Times." This newspaper of all others declared that the deputation was "introducing an entirely new factor into public life. The delegates are waiting on the Prime Minister . . . to issue their orders . . . This body of Trade Unionists is formally attempting to supersede constitutional government and to frighten the appointed Ministers of the Crown into doing their will. The Triple Alliance was formed for this purpose, as we pointed out at the time. The present is its first essay . . . and it remains to be seen whether the Government will abdicate or not." Mr. Asquith in his reply to the deputation gave the fullest expression of the Government's pledge of complete restoration.

In December, 1916, the Triple Alliance met again and passed resolutions, demanding, in view of the rise in the cost of living—(1) that amounts given under the Workmen's Compensation Acts should be increased; (2) and that all farm labourers should receive a 30s. a week minimum wage. The meeting also protested against the extended use of Chinese labour in the mercantile marine, against any importation of coloured labour, and against the use of mobile labour battalions under military control. The employment of coloured labour was being eagerly canvassed amongst the trade unions at this time, and it seems that the protest of the Triple Alliance was effective. At any rate, nothing more was heard of the proposal.

Thus the Triple Industrial Alliance, within a year of its formation, has already taken a prominent place in the Labour Movement, and partly owing to the concentration of its numbers in three bodies, partly owing to the forward character of these bodies, its deliberations and programme are now receiving at least as much consideration as those of the General Federation of Trade Unions.

The Triple Alliance has been much praised and often criticised. It has been praised as the first example of a new form of Trade Union combination far exceeding in power the existing organs of the Trade Union movement, and as a nucleus round which all that makes for a forward policy may gather. It has been criticised as an example of Prussianism—an attempt by three big industrial combinations to ignore the rest of the Trade Union movement, and to carry through the policy of organisation by industry with a high hand. The former of these views is surely nearer to the truth. The Triple Alliance is the most powerful Trade Union combine that any country has yet produced, and it may reasonably be hoped that it will serve as the nucleus of a new spirit in the

Labour movement. It has the future of Labour in its hands; and, if it is prepared to broaden its basis to include other partners when the time is ripe, it may be strong enough very greatly to help in that transformation of Trade Unionism in both structure and purpose which is necessary before it can become an efficient instrument for the furtherance of industrial freedom.

CHAPTER XV.

The Craft Unions and the N.U.R.

SINCE the formation of the National Union of Railwaymen, a quarrel which, in the words of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, "threatens the disruption of the Trade Union movement," has raged between the N.U.R. and the numerous craft Unions with members in railway shops. As we have seen, the membership rule of the N.U.R. opens the ranks to "all workers employed on or in connection with any railway in the United Kingdom." Some thousands of workers of various crafts and grades employed in the railway shops were taken over with the General Railway Workers' Union, and the subsequent propaganda of the N.U.R. rapidly multiplied this membership several times over, until at the end of 1916, there were well over 50,000 shopmen, skilled and unskilled, organised in its ranks. The railway shopmen, especially the woodworking crafts and the labourers, had always been largely unorganised, and the craft Unions had paid little attention to their needs, except in a few of the larger centres. In consequence, the N.U.R. found abundant scope for its organising activity, and both skilled and unskilled shopmen were rapidly enrolled. The immediate result of this was a sudden awakening of interest in the railway shopmen among the craft Unions, and the N.U.R. was accused, first of poaching upon craft Union preserves, and secondly of accepting men at less than the standard rate. In this chapter, a short account will be given of the progress up to the present time of the dispute, which still shows no sign of approaching a settlement. In the following chapter, an attempt will be made at a critical summary of the points at issue, with suggestions as to the lines along which a solution may yet be sought.

It was in 1914 that several of the larger craft Unions first met to consult jointly concerning the situation in the railway shops. Various communications passed between these Societies and the National Union of Railwaymen; but no very definite stage had been reached when, for a time, the outbreak of war interrupted the movement. This, however, was not for long. The problem remained unsolved, and on September 29th, 1914, a conference between the N.U.R. and a number of craft Unions, together with the National Union of General Workers, was held at Unity House

under the Chairmanship of Mr. Bellamy. At this meeting, the N.U.R. representatives stated that in their negotiations with the Railway Companies on the National Programme they had endeavoured to include all grades, but had been met by a refusal on the part of the Companies to negotiate about the railway shops, on the ground that they did not represent the shopmen. They had accordingly called this conference with a view to the establishment of joint machinery for dealing with railway shop questions, and they suggested "shop committees" as the most effective machinery.

The craft Unions at once raised the membership question, expressing their willingness that machinery should be set up to deal with shop questions, but demanding as a condition that the N.U.R. should "discontinue the policy of enrolling in membership craftsmen who ought to be members of their craft Unions."

The N.U.R. representatives pointed out in reply that the rules of their Union prevented them from refusing to enrol any class of railway workers; but they expressed their willingness to consider proposals to be submitted to their Executive on the lines of a transfer of members. To this the craft Unions replied by insisting upon their condition as a prelude to any further negotiations.

The action of the N.U.R. representatives was subsequently endorsed by their Executive Committee, and resolutions were passed intimating that the N.U.R. could not cease to enrol shopmen, but urging the establishment of agreed joint machinery for dealing with shop questions.

There, for the time being, the negotiations ended, and the craft Unions were left to consider what should be their next step. This was taken in February, 1915, when they formed the Railway Shops Organisation Committee of Craft Unions, which has since conducted the battle on behalf of craft Unionism. Gradually, the membership of the committee grew, until by the beginning of 1917 there were 32 craft Unions affiliated. In order to show the complexity of the question, and the extraordinary medley of craft Unions catering for railway shopmen, this list of Unions is set out in full :[1]

Amalgamated Society of Engineers.
Amalgamated Toolmakers.
Steam Engine Makers.
United Machine Workers.
Electrical Trades Union.

[1] This list omits the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, which has little to do with the shops, but is affiliated to the Committee. The various labourers' Unions with members in railway shops are, of course, not included in the craft Union Committee. The Steel Smelters, though an industrial Union, were at one time affiliated, but have now left the Committee, and have been endeavouring to reach a separate arrangement with the N.U.R.

National Society of Brassworkers.
United Journeymen Brassfounders and Finishers.
Associated Blacksmiths.
Smiths and Strikers.
Friendly Society of Ironfounders.
Amalgamated Moulders.
National Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers.
United Society of Boilermakers.
United Patternmakers.
Railway Vehicle Builders.
Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.
United Kingdom Society of Coachmakers.
Furnishing Trades Association.
National Amalgamated Painters.
Scottish Painters.
Amalgamated Farriers.
Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists.
Amalgamated Upholsterers.
Saddlers and General Leather Workers.
United Plumbers.
Amalgamated Cabinet Makers.
General Union of Carpenters and Joiners.
West of Scotland Brass Turners.
Machine, Engine, and Iron Grinders.
General Union of Sheet Metal Workers.
Amalgamated Coremakers.
Operative Stonemasons.

Upon the breakdown of the first series of negotiations, and the definite formation of the Railway Shops' Organisation Committee, the N.U.R. had to decide what action it should take. It determined upon the holding of a National Conference of N.U.R. Shopmen, and this met in Birmingham on May 18th, 1915. The question discussed was the form of machinery to be adopted in dealing with railway shop questions, the alternative suggestions being the establishment of shop committees or the inclusion of shopmen in the Conciliation Scheme. By a not very large majority, the principle of shop committees carried the day, the scheme providing for the democratic election of the proposed committees by the shopmen themselves, much on the lines adopted in the Conciliation Scheme. This decision did not become operative at the time, and, as we shall see, it was subsequently modified.

The next step was the intervention of the Joint Board. In May, 1915, the Railway Shops Organisation Committee approached the Parliamentary Committee with a view to persuading that body to take action against the N.U.R. As some of the Societies concerned were not affiliated to the Trades Union Congress, the Parliamentary Committee referred the question to the Joint Board,

and two conferences were held in August, 1915. At the second of these, the Joint Board submitted the following proposal :—

"That a Joint Committee of all the craft Unions and the National Union of Railwaymen be set up, with an independent chairman, to ascertain whether :

"(1) A scheme can be devised whereby all craft workers must belong to their respective craft Unions, and the administration expenses be pooled by a *per capita* tax of equal amount.

"(2) That the Joint Committee shall arrange for the setting-up of shop committees (representation to be in proportion to membership) who shall report to the Joint Committee any grievance of a general character affecting wages, hours, or the conditions of working.

"(3) That in cases of dispute, where the National Union of Railwaymen, being the major body, deem it advisable to tender notices, the craft Unions shall appoint representatives to watch the interests of the craft members. Should a strike or lock-out ensue, the craft Unions to act for and support their own members."

Such a tangled suggestion, evading all the main points at issue, was not likely to satisfy either party. The craft Unions at once tabled the following amendment :—

"That a Joint Committee of all craft Unions involved and the N.U.R. be set up, with an independent chairman, to prepare and report upon a scheme whereby all craft workers must belong to their respective craft Unions, and the establishing of machinery for dealing with the wages and conditions of employment of all railway shopmen."

The N.U.R. naturally tabled a counter amendment :—

"That a Joint Committee of all craft Unions involved and the N.U.R. be set up, with an independent chairman, to ascertain whether :—

"(1) A scheme can be devised whereby all craft workers employed by a Railway Company who are members of their respective craft Unions and also members of thet N.U.R. may retain membership in both Unions.

"(2) That unorganised craft workers employed by a Railway Company may be allowed to join the Union of their choice."

A long discussion followed, without any approach to an agreement between the parties. The Joint Board then moved a resolution merely suggesting a Joint Committee equally representing the two sides, with an independent chairman, to discuss and report upon the differences. This the craft Unions refused to accept. Mr. Seddon, as an individual, then moved a second time the first clause of the original Joint Board proposal, which included the phrase, "must be members of their craft Unions." The N.U.R. suggested "may" instead of "must"; the craft Unions refused, and the conference ended abortively.

The craft Unions therefore carried the question to the Trades Union Congress of September, 1915, where Mr. Compton, of the Coachmakers' Society moved the following resolution :—

> "That this Congress reaffirms the resolutions of 1906 and 1907, viz., that any method of organisation that seeks to divide workmen from their fellows in the same occupation is detrimental to the best interests of Trade Unionism, and calls upon the Parliamentary Committee to instruct its Joint Board representatives to immediately enforce the recommendations of the Board of June 4th, 1907, against any Society charged with such conduct."

A full dress debate followed, in which the miners and the railwaymen as advocates of Industrial Unionism, found against them the whole conservative force of the craft Unions. Finally, the resolution was carried, on a card vote, by 1,300,000 to 1,100,000, which means that practically all the other Unions voted against the miners and the railwaymen.

Instructed to take action immediately upon this resolution, the new Parliamentary Committee found itself with no easy task. It took the course of appointing a special Sub-Committee to deal with the question, and the Sub-Committee met the representatives of the two parties, first separately, and later in joint conference, both agreeing to suspend for one month the enrolling of new members in the railway shops. At the joint meeting, which was held on February 16th, 1916, a Joint Sub-Committee was appointed to submit proposals, and the following suggestions were sent out to the two parties :—

1. A Joint National Committee shall be formed of representatives of the craft Unions and the National Union of Railwaymen, having power to deal with (as hereinafter provided) all grievances of a general character affecting wages, hours, or conditions of employment in railway shops.

2. Shop Committees shall be formed of representatives of the above Unions in each railway centre having power to deal

with all local questions which can be settled by friendly negotiation. Questions of a wider or more difficult character shall be reported to the Joint National Committee.

(It was agreed that the consideration of the question of setting up a Central Committee [for each railway] should be reserved for a future conference.)

3. Craftmen employees of railway companies who have served a recognised term of apprenticeship, or who, in the absence of an indenture, produce satisfactory evidence of having worked at their trade for five years, and who are not at present members of any Union, shall be members of their respective craft Unions. Employees in railway shops not coming within the foregoing definition shall be members of the National Union of Railwaymen.

4. Unions affiliated to the Joint Committee shall pay a nominal contribution of ½d. per member per week to the Joint Committee for each member employed by railway companies to meet administrative expenses and the payment of strike and lock-out benefits of a uniform character from the pooled funds of the Joint Committee for each such member. Any necessary readjustments to bring the member's benefits into harmony with his own Union's rules to be met from the funds of that Union."

This scheme, though it was adopted by the Sub-Committee, found no favour. The craft Unions replied to it, not indeed with a complete negative, but with amendments which reopened the whole question. They urged (1) that the Sub-Committee should arrange the proportion of representation from the craft Unions and the N.U.R., and report; (2) that a definition should be found for membership of the craft Unions to cover men who had worked less than five years at the trade; (3) that the last words of Clause 3, which might involve the general Labour Unions, should be referred back for re-drafting ; (4) that the pooled funds should be for administration only, and that all reference to strike and lock-out benefits should be deleted. In fact, they wanted to reserve a higher proportion of shopmen for themselves, so as to include all who could possibly be called skilled, and they refused to recognise the exclusive right of the N.U.R. to organise the unskilled.

The N.U.R. was even more drastic in its reply. It rejected the proposed scheme *en bloc*, and took a firm stand by something like its original proposals. In place of the Joint Committee's suggestions, it tabled the following :—

"1. A Joint Committee shall be formed for the purpose of bringing into operation a scheme for adjusting differences between the Railway Companies and their employees in railway shops by means of shop committees. The Joint Committee shall consist of an equal number of representatives from the Railway Shops' Organisation Committee and the National Union of Railwaymen.

"2. Shop Committees shall be formed of representatives of the aforementioned organisations employed in each railway centre, having powers to deal with all local joint questions which can be settled by friendly negotiation. Questions of a wider or more difficult character shall be referred to a Central Committee to be formed on each railway, and composed of representatives of local Shop Committees.

"3. Members of craft Unions obtaining employment in railway shops shall, whilst retaining membership of their parent organisation, pay to the N.U.R. a nominal contribution of —d. per week, and be entitled to receive from that Union strike and legal defence benefits. (The sum required to meet this shall be paid by arrangement between the Union the man belongs to and the N.U.R.). Members of the N.U.R. employed in railway shops, on leaving the Railway Companies' employment, shall join the Union controlling the industry in which they gain employment."

The fate of the Sub-Committee's proposals did not augur well for a settlement, and, although the Parliamentary Committee made a further effort, the negotiations were never resumed in any complete form. The Parliamentary Committee met the N.U.R. Executive without result, and the N.U.R. asked that both sides should submit a full statement of their membership in railway shops as a preliminary to further negotiations. This the craft Unions refused to do, and there, at the time of writing, the matter still remains.

Throughout the later stages of the quarrel, the issue was complicated by the wages question. We have outlined in another chapter the various agitations for advances in wages conducted by the N.U.R.; and there have, of course, been similar movements, in this case local in character, in the engineering industry. The railway shopmen stand between the two. The Railway Companies have never paid in the shops the standard district rate of wages for engineers,[1] partly because they have often set up their shops in country districts, partly because the craft Unions have always been weak in the shops, and partly because it is claimed that the con-

[1] The larger shops of the Great Central Railway are the only places in which standard rates have been paid.

tinuity of employment and other privileges of railway shopmen justify a lower rate—mainly, of course, for the second reason. The shopmen, therefore, did not automatically share in the advances granted to engineers by conference with the employers or by arbitration before the Committee on Production. The N.U.R. was throughout anxious to include them in its settlements with the Railway Companies; but the Companies were no less anxious to exclude them. The railway shopmen were thus in danger of falling between two stools; and this danger was increased by the relations prevailing between the craft Unions and the N.U.R. The N.U.R. claimed that the advances which they won should apply to shopmen, and negotiated with the Companies and the Board of Trade in order to secure this: the craft Unions approached the Committee on Production for an advance, and objected to the appearance of the N.U.R. with them as an acceptance of its claim to represent shopmen—thus exhibiting the internal differences of Trade Unionism openly before the Government and the Companies. Despite these difficulties, the shopmen won their advances, notably 5s., corresponding to the 5s. advance conceded to other railway employees in October, 1916. A horrid clamour then arose: the craft Unions issued leaflets stating that they had won the bonus for the shopmen, and that the N.U.R. had nothing to do with it. The N.U.R. replied with a speech and pamphlet by Mr. J. H. Thomas, in which he had very clearly the best of it. The craftsmen would, no doubt, have got some advance from the Committee on Production without the N.U.R.; but no reasonable person can doubt that the 5s. conceded was mainly a result of the N.U.R. agitation.

In this chapter, we have confined ourselves strictly to facts, without entering in any way into the merits of the case between the N.U.R. and the craft Unions. To that difficult and vital question we must now turn.

[The 5s. bonus of April, 1917, was extended to shopmen, the agreement being signed both by the N.U.R. and the Railway Shops Organization Committee.]

CHAPTER XVI.

The Problem of the Railway Shops

It is easiest to begin our criticism of the railway shop problem with a short summary of a dispute which took place while the N.U.R. was being founded. On January 22nd, 1913, the *Daily Herald* published with comments a summary of the new rules drafted for submission to the fusion conference. It quoted the membership rule, which it claimed as a triumph for Industrial Unionism, and added by way of explanation the following sentences :—

"Carters, clerks, engineers, boilermakers, coachmakers, in fact, every class of worker employed by any railway, will be admitted to membership. Doubtless we shall have the usual outcry from the "legitimate" Unions catering for these workers about poaching; but the railwaymen will be well advised to go ahead with their good work of organising by industry instead of craft."

This article roused the anger of Mr. Thomas, who replied to it in an interview in the next day's *Daily Citizen* as follows :—

"The statement that engineers, boilermakers, coachmakers, etc., will be admitted to membership of the new organisation regardless of the outcry of other Unions is absolutely inaccurate. It is not intended, and personally I hope it never will be intended, for this or any other Union to take into its ranks those who properly belong to other organisations, such as skilled trades."

The effect of Mr. Thomas's statement was that the fat was in the fire. The Committees of the three old Unions had then just met separately to discuss the scheme of fusion. The General Railway Workers' Union, which had all along taken grades of workers who were refused by the A.S.R.S., at once declared that they would not proceed with the fusion unless their craftsmen members were retained, and thereupon the A.S.R.S. passed a declaration that all classes of workers would be accepted. Mr. Thomas then modified what he had said; but he declared that his statement "was based upon a discussion of a long and protracted character which had taken place upon the matter," and that he held that "the intention was clearly to be interpreted to take only those eligible for membership in the G.R.W.U., and which are refused by the A.S.R.S." He continued as follows :—

"I most certainly did not conceive it was intended that engineers, boilermakers, coachmakers, and other skilled tradesmen who are eligible for their own particular craft Unions, and enjoy the conditions of service which have been obtained for them by those Unions, were to be admitted into this organisation. My reason for this assumption was not alone because I considered it to be unfair, but because I could conceive of nothing but friction in the Trade Union world if this was contemplated" (*Railway Review,* February, 1913).

This discussion has been cited because it raises the issue in the clearest possible way. The National Union of Railwaymen claims that all railway workers, no matter what their occupation, should be organised in one Union : and this at once brings it into conflict with Unions that include certain classes of railwaymen along with workers who have no connection with a railway company.

The problem arises most acutely in connection with the railway shops. The construction and maintenance of locomotives, rolling stock, etc., is a large part of the work of every important railway company, and is concentrated in the great railway centres, such as Crewe, Derby, Glasgow, Swindon, Darlington, Eastleigh, etc. There are, as we saw, more than 86,000 mechanics employed by railway companies, and a large number of these are organised in the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Boilermakers, the Ironfounders, the Steam Engine Makers, the Blacksmiths, and other Unions of Metal Workers, Woodworkers, etc. Any attempt to force all these workers into the N.U.R. would clearly lead to a prodigious and disastrous upheaval in the Trade Union world, and it is fairly clear that the A.S.R.S. leaders, who became the leaders of the N.U.R., intended not to provoke this conflict if they could help it. At the same time, they could not secure amalgamation with the G.R.W.U., which already covered some of the grades concerned, without the comprehensive membership rule which was adopted, and in addition they keenly desired to see a single organisation for all railway workers. The remarks let slip by Mr. Thomas were fairly clearly an indiscretion which represented the real intention of some of the A.S.R.S. leaders.

Besides the mechanics, there are in the engineering shops very large numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled labourers—a very great proportion of the 73,000 railway employees classed as labourers come under this head. These labourers were then eligible for the A.S.E., which, however, they were not in many districts encouraged to join; but they were not and are not eligible for most of the other metal Unions. In certain cases they are organised in general labour Unions. It will be noted that Mr. Thomas did not say that the N.U.R. had no intention of organising these workers, who were in the main the section covered by the old G.R.W.U., though not by the A.S.R.S. In view of the failure of

the Craft Unions to include them, it seemed unlikely that their inclusion by the N.U.R. would lead to inter-Union friction on a large scale, especially as the general labour Unions have, on the whole, never been strong in the railway shops. Moreover, apart from the theory of Industrial Unionism, there was a very practical reason why the N.U.R. should see to it that these men were organised. The mechanic is not, as a rule, a potential blackleg : the labourer clearly is. If he is left unorganised there is nothing to prevent the companies from turning him on to do the work of any of the less skilled grades during a railway stoppage. From the purely practical point of view, therefore, it is vital to the interests of railwaymen generally that the less skilled grades of shopmen should be well organised; and in face of the disregard of these grades by the skilled Unions, and the weakness of the general labour Unions, it was natural that the N.U.R. should endeavour to enrol them. This would have been the case even had there been no theory of Industrial Unionism or solidarity of all railwaymen in their minds : it was made inevitable as soon as the idea of an all-grades blackleg-proof railway Union came within measurable distance of realisation.

The railway shop problem is so complicated that it will be well to simplify it as far as we can before embarking upon a full discussion of its merits. In the first place, there are four distinct points of view from which it must be regarded. There is, first, the point of view of the shopmen themselves; secondly, that of the other grades of railway workers; thirdly, that of metal and wood working craftsmen outside the railway shops; and fourthly, that of the Trade Union movement as a whole. We want to find, if we can, a method of organisation which ought to satisfy all these, by giving to all the greatest possible amount of economic strength.

Or, again, we can divide the problem, not according to the classes of workers affected, but according to the issues raised. First, there is the question whether "craft" or "industry" is the right basis for Trade Union organisation; secondly, there is the question whether the railway shops are a part of the railway, or of the engineering, industry. Nor, when we have answered these points, supposing that we are able to answer them, have we settled the whole question, for whatever Union organises the shopmen will clearly have to have relations of a close character with other Unions.

We shall begin with the biggest question, that of craft versus industry. The Craft Unions claim the exclusive right to organise skilled shopmen on the ground that the proper basis for Trade Union organisation is craft, the grouping together of all workers who are engaged on the same "job" or process, or group of allied processes. On this basis the Unions of skilled workers have always relied, and any departure from it seems to them an aban-

donment of the most sacred principles of Trade Unionism. Against the Craft Unionists are ranged the Industrial Unionists, who claim that all workers engaged in an industry should be in the same Union—that is, all workers who co-operate in producing the same product or type of product, or in rendering the same service. These two principles clearly conflict in many ways. The Craft Unionist would unite in one Union all carpenters and joiners or all plumbers, whether they are in the building, or in the shipbuilding, or in some other industry; the Industrial Unionists would unite in one Union all building workers, all mining workers, or all cotton workers, to whatever craft they may belong. Again, the craft Unionist would usually organise only skilled workers, leaving the unskilled to the general labour Unions, whereas the Industrial Unionist believes firmly in organising skilled and unskilled together. The fundamental quarrel between the N.U.R. and the Railway Shops Organisation Committee is a quarrel between Craft and Industrial Unionism.

This, however, is not the only quarrel. Just as it is often very difficult to say where one craft begins and another leaves off, it is not always easy to see a clear line of division between industries. Demarcation disputes may exist in a different form between Industrial Unions, though they will be far fewer, and will turn upon far bigger questions than in the case of Craft Unions. We have seen that the Steel Smelters were at one time affiliated to the Railway Shops Organisation Committee, though they have since left it and opened up separate negotiations with the N.U.R. Now the Steel Smelters are an Industrial Union, catering for all grades of workers, skilled and unskilled, engaged in the manufacture of iron and steel. The dispute between them and the N.U.R. is a dispute not between a Craft Union and an Industrial Union, but between two Industrial Unions. The question between them is whether iron and steel works owned by railway companies and producing iron and steel plates, rails, etc., for railway use, belong to the iron and steel or to the railway industry.

We have taken the case of the Steel Smelters because it is the clearest; but this problem of the line of division between industries also enters as a complicating factor into the quarrel between the N.U.R. and the Craft Unions. The metal-working Unions concerned are primarily Unions of skilled workers in the engineering industry, and they claim the skilled shopmen not only on the ground of craft, but also on that of industry. This can be made clear by two examples. A question somewhat similar on the surface to that of the railway shops arises in connection with craftsmen employed in the mines. But we have heard engineers who admit that mining craftsmen belong to the mining industry strongly deny that railway shopmen belong to the railway industry. The mining craftsman, they point out, is merely an adjunct to the

mine, whereas the railway shops are great separate engineering establishments, and, as such, belong to the engineering industry. The second example seems to show that to a certain extent the N.U.R. recognises that there is a *bona-fide* dispute as to the line of demarcation between industries. When the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen was admitted to the Committee of Craft Unions, the N.U.R. protested, and refused, very naturally, to make a settlement in which they would be included. The particular negotiations which we described in the last chapter were, in fact, between a railway Industrial Union and a number of Unions belonging to the engineering industry. If, then, a settlement is to be found, not only the question of craft versus industry, but also the question of industry versus industry will have to be faced.

There is, moreover, a third complication. Above, we have defined an Industrial Union as a Union which aims at uniting all those workers who co-operate in producing the same kind of product, or in rendering the same kind of service. Not all Industrial Unionists accept this definition, for some of them define an Industrial Union as one which unites all workers employed by the same kind of employer. The rules of the N.U.R. make eligible for membership all workers "employed on or in connection with any railway"; and this may easily be interpreted as meaning all workers employed by any railway company.

There are, in fact, three main types of Trade Union organisation —Unionism by Process (Craft Unionism), Unionism by Product (Industrial Unionism), and Unionism by Employer (often called Industrial Unionism). The distinction between the two latter can easily be made clear by reference to another dispute which has greatly troubled the Trade Union movement in recent years. In 1916 the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees circularised the branches of the N.U.R. for support in its struggle with the Shop Assistants and the other Unions catering for co-operative workers. The A.U.C.E., claiming to be an Industrial Union, appealed to the Railwaymen for support as fellow Industrial Unionists. The ground of the A.U.C.E. claim was that they organised all workers employed by Co-operative Societies, and they appealed to the N.U.R. as a Union open to all employees of Railway Companies. The Shop Assistants very truly retorted that the A.U.C.E. was not an Industrial Union because it did not organise all distributive workers, and counter-appealed to the N.U.R. as a Union catering for railway transport workers of all grades.

It is clear that the principle of organisation by employer could not be generally adopted. It is, indeed, only practicable where there is a large and clearly differentiated employer or group of employers, *i.e.*, in the Government service, national and local, in the Co-operative movement, and in the railways. Elsewhere, there

is no defined and distinctive class of employer on which a national Trade Union organisation could be based. If, then, as its advocates claim, Industrial Unionism can be applied to all industries, it cannot rest upon the basis of a common employer. The only basis on which a general theory of Industrial Unionism can be based is that of co-operation in the production of a common product or the rendering of a common service.

The arguments for this form of organisation are twofold: first, that it increases the fighting strength of labour by giving a better unit for industrial action with the workshop or factory as its basis, and all workers in the workshop or in competing or similar workshops in the same Union; and secondly that it affords the only basis on which the workers can set out to control, either jointly with the State or by themselves, the industry in which they are engaged. These arguments seem to the present writers clearly to outweigh the arguments in favour of Craft Unionism, which are largely based not on the strength of Trade Unionism as an industrial force, but on the organisation of friendly benefits. Fellow-craftsmen, it is urged, must organise together, not only because their wages are largely interdependent, but also because their social status and position in respect of friendly benefits are mainly the same. That this argument has a certain force the Industrial Unionist will probably not deny; but, taking his stand firmly upon the principle that Trade Unionism is to be regarded mainly and primarily as a fighting force, he will refuse to allow "friendly" considerations to outweigh the first consideration of industrial efficiency. If the solidarity of all workers in the workshop and the industry can be secured, he will be prepared to work for a mutual adjustment with Craft Unionism; but he will refuse any adjustment that involves the sacrifice of solidarity.

We are therefore driven back upon the second question. Can the railway shops legitimately be regarded as a part of the railway industry, or are they, on the other hand, a part of the engineering industry?

What is an industry? We speak freely of "the boot and shoe industry," "the cotton industry," "the shipbuilding industry," and so forth. We speak also of "the engineering industry" and of "the railway industry." In the present case, we have two rival claimants to the same class of workers, and both claimants speak in the name of Industrial Unionism. Take first the argument from the engineering side. In the eyes of some engineering Industrial Unionists, a man belongs to the engineering industry, not because he is a mechanic, but because, whether he is a mechanic, a labourer, or what not, he works in a shop of which the business is making manufactured metal goods. Thus, a mechanic employed in a mine or a textile factory does not belong to the engineering industry: but a man who is working in an engineering shop does, whether he

is making machines for cutting coal, or for weaving cotton, or for making boots, or for mowing hay. Does he then, it is asked, belong any the less to the engineering industry because in his particular shop the machines that are being made are locomotives for use on the railways? On this view, the railway industry is a transport industry : it has nothing more to do with the organisation of those who make its machines than the docker has to do with those who make his cranes.

"That is all very well," the railway Industrial Unionist will reply, "but it fails to touch my main point. The docker and the maker of cranes, the agricultural labourer, and the maker of threshing machines, are not under the same employer. But the traffic worker and the mechanic in the engineering shops are both employees of the railway company, and therefore they should be in the same Union. By standing together they will exact better terms from the common enemy. Whatever is possible in theory, in practice the making of locomotives is, and will continue to be, an integral part of the railway industry. We therefore cannot abate our claim to include all employed on or about railways."

This is clearly a strong case from the practical point of view; but it does not touch the theoretical argument of the engineering Industrial Unionist. It is true that in theory the railway shops are a part of the engineering industry, and that accordingly the engineering Unions have a strong claim to organise those employed in them. They have also a practical case; for conditions in the railway shops do profoundly affect, and are affected by, conditions in general engineering shops. Moreover, it seems absurd that a private firm, making locomotives or wagons, should be regarded as belonging to one industry and a railway company doing precisely the same as belonging to another. A further instance, showing how interwoven the railway shops are with both industries is to be found in the impossibility of deciding whether the shopmen's war bonus of 1916 was won by the Craft Unions or by the N.U.R.

The solution of the quarrel seems clearly to lie in some sort of compromise which will afford at least a measure of satisfaction to both parties. The fact is that the railway shops are on the borderline between the two industries, though we incline to the view that they are just in engineering territory. The most hopeful suggestion seems to lie in a dual membership, by which all railway craftsmen belong both to the N.U.R. and to the Union of their fellow-craftsmen outside the railway shops. With such a system, the control of industrial movements in the shops might be vested in a joint council or councils, representing both parties, but principally the Trade Unionist shopmen themselves. Friendly benefits could then be left to the Craft Unions, while the joint body could assume liability for strike and lock-out, victimisation, and legal benefits,

the contributions being divided in agreed proportions to meet the charges incurred.

This will, no doubt, be a hard pill for both sides to swallow; but swallow it, or something like it, they must, if a most damaging internal struggle is to be avoided. If the N.U.R. secure the unskilled shopmen, they get adequate protection against blacklegging, while the shopmen will be in the best possible position for securing better terms if they have a status in, and a backing from, both industries. There is clear need for co-operation between the parties; and co-operation can only be secured on a basis of give and take.

If machinery of this sort were set up, the way would at last be clear to deal with the shopmen's grievances with a strong hand, and to break down the stiff-necked attitude of the railway companies.

We have already seen how the A.S.L.E. and F. and the N.U.R. agreed that, in the amended conciliation scheme, it should be possible for any grade of workers to come into the scheme if it desired, whether it was engaged in the manipulation of traffic or not. By this change, the way would be opened for participation in the scheme by the skilled mechanics, as well as by the unskilled labourers in the engineering shops. The working of such a scheme would evidently demand a high degree of co-operation between the N.U.R. and the mechanics' Unions, which have hitherto stood apart from general railway affairs. Indeed, both the A.S.E. and the Boilermakers are open to the charge of having neglected the interests of their railway members, who have been in the past less well off than the mechanics in other branches of engineering. One of the first effects of the formation of the N.U.R. was to make the mechanics' Unions take a sudden and unwonted interest in this class of workers. Participation along with the N.U.R. in a revised conciliation scheme might be the best way of improving their conditions: it might also, by introducing a large new class of highly-paid men, help to overcome the reluctance of the A.S.L.E. and F. to work along with other grades on a composite board.

There is, however, an alternative to actual inclusion in the conciliation scheme, and this alternative seems more likely actually to be brought about. We have seen in the last chapter how the N.U.R. Shopmen's Conference at Birmingham in May, 1915, decided by a small majority in favour of shop committees as against inclusion in the conciliation scheme on the same terms as the other grades. The Annual General Meeting at Bath in 1916, despite an explanation of the decisions of this Conference, decided against shop committees and in favour of inclusion in the conciliation scheme; but the Executive Committee, in working out a new scheme for negotiation with the companies, after mature consideration, decided to revert to the principle of elected shop committees,

and their immediate formation is included in the latest proposals of the N.U.R. In view of inter-Union complications, this is probably the best way out of the difficulty. The elected shop committee will give the railway shopmen themselves the opportunity of determining their own policy, and it is to be hoped that the effect will be that they will insist on a settlement of the quarrel on lines satisfactory to themselves.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Transport Industry

We have dealt at length with the quarrel that centres round the railway shops, because it is a vital matter for the whole Trade Union movement. We must deal far more briefly with the other problems of inter-Union relations that have arisen since the formation of the N.U.R.

These concern the relation between the railways and other forms of transport, where Railway Companies themselves encroach upon other branches of transport work.

First comes the case of the carters. Railway carting is done in part by direct employees of the Companies, in part through contracting carting agents who confine themselves to railway work, and in part through master carters who do private work as well. The question therefore arises what carters are eligible for the N.U.R., and some difficult cases have already had to be decided. The line taken so far is that carters directly employed by a Railway Company or by a carting agent confining himself to railway work are alone eligible.

This question has so far not led to serious trouble; but it clearly might do so, in face of the attempts to build up a great amalgamated Union for all vehicle workers. It is certainly not an easy question to decide in all cases; but it seems clear that a carter who is employed on full-time work in connection with the railway industry must be treated as belonging to that industry, while a carter employed on all kinds of carting work no less clearly belongs to another branch of transport.

The docks' problem has given rise to more trouble. Where a Railway Company owns a line running to a docks, and where it carries on dock work on its own behalf, difficult questions are bound to arise. Thus, disagreement about membership has arisen with the Dockers' Union at Cardiff and Barry, and at Partington. In all these places there are workers in the employment of a Railway Company who are organised in the Dockers' Union, and there is a tendency on the part of those who are in arrears to transfer from one organisation to the other. These questions are now under discussion between the two bodies, and there seems no doubt that an amicable settlement will be reached.

On these rough edges of the industry difficult problems cannot but occur, and, as they occur, be met by compromise.

A second question in relation to dock labour was raised by the request of the North of England Trimmers' and Teemers' Association to amalgamate with the N.U.R. The application was refused on the ground that it was contrary to the rules of the Union; for the Trimmers and Teemers, who had 1588 members in 1912, include many who are not employed by Railway Companies. In these circumstances, clearly no other decision could have been made. Though many of its members may be eligible for the N.U.R., the place of the Trimmers and Teemers, as a Society, is clearly in a transport amalgamation.[1]

It is worth while for a moment to discuss the desirability of such a step as the fusion of the Unions covering every branch of transport, which has been urged, and has found some support, upon the Executive of the N.U.R. It would seem that the suggestion is at least premature. There is hope that very soon the railwaymen will possess a compact and practically blackleg-proof organisation: the transport workers, on the other hand, are only slowly feeling their way towards unity. Moreover, the transport Unions are inextricably mingled with those catering for general labour, and complete transport amalgamation is inevitably hampered by the general labour difficulty. When the recent scheme for a complete fusion of all the transport and general labour Unions was under discussion, Mr. Robert Williams, of the Transport Workers' Federation, declared that he desired amalgamation in order to sectionalise: that is, in order to separate out the waterside workers from the general labourers. But till such a step has been taken, it is absurd to suggest any closer tie than that of federation between railwaymen and waterside workers. Joint action is now in great measure secured by means of the Triple Industrial Alliance.

Of the ultimate desirability of complete transport amalgamation, including not only railwaymen and waterside workers, but seamen, tramwaymen, carters, busmen, etc., it is more difficult to speak. Such an organisation would, however, easily become too cumbrous for effective handling, and it is better for the main branches of the industry to have industrial Unions of their own, even at the cost of a little friction about marginal cases. Such friction is as nothing compared with that which normally accompanies Craft Unionism. There are rough edges to every industry; but the problems raised by them are manageable and unlikely to lead to serious trouble.

[1] This problem, however, is beginning to settle itself, as those members of the Trimmers and Teemers who are eligible for the N.U.R. are tending to transfer on account of the better terms which the N.U.R. is able to offer them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Railway Clerks' Association

I COME last of all to the position of the railway clerks, who, as we have seen, still keep their separate Union and have never been affiliated to the other railway societies. Their present organisation dates back twenty years: but the first attempts to organise the clerical grades were somewhat earlier.

The effect of the Education Act of 1870 was to make available a large new supply of labour, more or less qualified for office work. Of this the railway companies tried to take advantage: the attempt was made to use the schools as "clerk factories," and to cut down salaries by the increased employment of youths. For instance, the Great Northern Railway reduced its published scale maximum for juniors from 30s. to 28s. per week. Other companies were no less mean, and the whole standard for clerical remuneration, for juniors and seniors alike, was threatened.

These events caused considerable numbers of clerks to join the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, especially on the North-Eastern line, where so many forward movements have begun. It was on this line that matters first came to a head. In 1897, the A.S.R.S. submitted demands on behalf of the clerks, as well as the other grades of workers.

The company not only refused to consider these demands, but also prohibited organisation among clerical workers, and refused the offer, which the A.S.R.S. then made, to form the clerks into separate branches. Hardly strong enough itself to resist, and finding only limited support among the clerks, the A.S.R.S. abandoned the task; but in the same year the Railway Clerks' Association was founded at Sheffield, the company professing to have no objection to a separate society. The next ten years were a period of slow growth, and repeated failures. Several times the R.C.A. was almost submerged. At the conference of 1898, only nine delegates attended, of whom four voted for and five against dissolution. Then, however, the tide turned, and in 1906 the R.C.A. had already 60 branches and 4,000 members. From 1906 the growth has been continuous and rapid.

In 1907 the companies again began to interfere with the organisation of the clerks. The North-Eastern again took the initiative by issuing an instruction to all departmental officers to find out what men were Trade Unionists, and to inform them that they would only be allowed to occupy very subordinate positions, and

that they need not expect to make any progress in the railway service so long as they remained in the R.C.A. Members of the Association who were in responsible positions were called on to renounce their membership on pain of being removed to lower positions. This attitude the company justified by saying that "no business man would allow his confidential clerks to enter any organisation by which they would be able to use the information and the intelligence in connection with their particular work against the company, perhaps in some dispute that might arise."

This action roused the spirit of resistance among the North-Eastern clerks, but the company persisted in its attitude, and members of the Association were deliberately penalised. The R.C.A., which had become affiliated to the Trade Union Congress in 1903, thereupon took the matter to the Parliamentary Committee of that body, and, with their assistance and that of the Labour Party, a Bill promoted by the N.E.R. was blocked in the House of Commons.

Mr. Richard Bell, who at that time was General Secretary of the A.S.R.S., intervened, and attempted to arrange a compromise by which only a limited number of the higher grades of clerks would be excluded from the Association. This arrangement the R.C.A. refused to accept on the ground that it was an insult to suppose that clerks would divulge confidential information or use it unfairly against the company, also that every man, no matter what position he held in the service, had as much right to belong to the Railway *Clerks'* Association as the company and its officials had to belong to the Railway *Companies'* Association. After the Bill had been blocked for five weeks, the matter was debated in the House of Commons, and Mr. Bell, who considered his compromise would be the best solution, spoke favourably to the passing of the Bill. As Mr. Bell was a member of the Trade Union Congress Parliamentary Committee, all the other members of which were supporting the opposition to the Bill, the R.C.A. considered Mr. Bell had acted improperly in speaking for the company and their Bill under such circumstances, and moved a vote of censure upon Mr. Bell at the Trade Union Congress in the following September (1909). An apology from him was accepted by the Congress, but not by the R.C.A., which maintained that Mr. Bell should either have assisted his colleagues of the Parliamentary Committee or at least have kept silent if he did not wish to resign from that body.

The Bill was not carried to a division, as an adjournment was arranged to permit of further negotiations between the company and the Trade Union. The R.C.A. eventually carried its point that no clerk should be debarred from membership. No further serious attempts have been made by any railway company to place an embargo upon membership in the R.C.A.[1] except on the Midland where a certain amount of intimidation was attempted in one or two

departments during 1912. The R.C.A. took occasion to expose this in a printed report presented to every member of Parliament while the Railway Rates Bill was under discussion, and this, together with the exposure of the company's methods that took place at the time that the case of Guard Richardson was likely to cause a general strike, resulted in the Midland abandoning its repressive policy and leaving every employee free to be a Trade Unionist. It may now be said that that is the general policy of all the railway companies.

The issue is in this case simple, as only clerical workers are admitted to the R.C.A., while the N.U.R. does not in practice cater for these grades. Only in two cases do problems of demarcation seem actually to have arisen. The first case was in connection with the ambiguous grade of porter-clerks. This has given no serious trouble, as, although the new rules of the R.C.A. (1914) provide for the admission not only of "duly appointed members of the clerical staff in any department of any railway," but also of "unappointed, supernumerary or temporary clerks, and clerks employed by Railway Carting Agents," all applications for membership under the second head have to be submitted to the Executive Committee.

The Annual Report for 1913 is explicit on this point. "The broad principle is that we do not wish to accept men for whom the R.C.A. cannot act as a Trade Union, and who ought to be in the N.U.R." The question arose in connection with "certain railway employees who really belong to the operative grades, but who have some writing to do in connection with their work."

The attempt to organise stationmasters, whom the R.C.A. is making an increasing effort to attract, has led to a little friction in the West of England, where some weekly-paid stationmasters have joined the N.U.R., and are said to show willingness to work below the R.C.A. scale of salaries. But with these insignificant exceptions the R.C.A. is the only Trade Union catering for clerks, agents, stationmasters, canvassers, and similar classes of workers.

The question of closer unity with the other railway Unions first came to the front about the time of the railway agitation in 1906-7, when the R.C.A. took part in abortive negotiations for a scheme of federation. In 1910 a resolution urging amalgamation with other railway Unions was defeated at the R.C.A. Conference, and the same fate befell a resolution in favour of federation at the 1911 Conference. At the 1914 Congress, the Leeds branch, supported by seven other branches, tabled a resolution in favour of amalgamation, while the Railway Clearing House branch, one of the strongest in the Association, pressed for a permanent joint board of railway Unions. Both resolutions were shelved by the

[1] There have been further cases during the war, especially in relation to women clerks.

moving of the previous question on the ground that the time was not ripe for closer unity.

Regrettable as this must seem to all advocates of Industrial Unionism, the reason for it is obvious. Combination among clerks has always been a matter of peculiar difficulty because there has been a tendency, decreasing but considerable, to regard it as *infra dig.* The growth of solidarity among the clerical staff has been very remarkable of late years; but it can hardly be doubted that amalgamation, or even federation, with the operative grades would mean a set back to organisation, especially among station-masters and chief clerks. The reason for the official opposition to amalgamation, even on the part of those who favour Industrial Unionism, is the fear of dealing a blow at the organisation just at the moment when it is growing most rapidly in both numbers and class-consciousness. There can be little doubt that amalgamation will come of its own accord when the R.C.A. is strong enough to stand it. Meanwhile, it is all to the good that there is a growing opinion in the R.C.A. in favour of fusion, and that this has even led to the formation of an informal joint committee with certain members of the N.U.R. in furtherance of the project. The only danger is that the growth of this healthy spirit may lead to a rupture in the R.C.A. itself; for such a premature break-away could have no good result and would merely make the task of organising the many thousands of clerical workers who still remain outside the Association far more difficult.

There is a further reason against immediate fusion of the two Unions. The R.C.A. has up to the present never declared a strike, though there is in fact nothing in its rules which expressly prevents it from doing so. It has stopped short hitherto at the stage of negotiation, and has met with considerable success by the method of publishing facts and figures describing the economic position of the railway clerk. This has caused boys who are leaving school to avoid railway offices, and has forced railway managers to institute and publish better terms of employment for the clerical staff. But the method of "publicity" clearly has its limits, and the necessity for more drastic action is the subject of constant discussion within the R.C.A. At the 1914 Congress two resolutions on this question were moved, one urging the immediate adoption of a strike policy, or, as amended with the consent of its proposers, calling upon the Executive to consider the adoption of a strike policy, and the other demanding a ballot of the Association on the question. The first resolution, as amended, was defeated by a large majority; the second was shelved by means of the previous question. It was clear, all through the debates on both resolutions, that there was still a strong feeling against any such step, based partly on the natural conservatism of the clerical worker, but also very largely on the fear of losing the right to the

pensions and superannuation allowances administered by the Railway Companies, as actually happened on the Great Central Railway in 1911, in a lock-out case in which it took the clerks two years to secure restitution by law of their pension rights by the passing of a short Act of Parliament. The resolution asking the Executive to take a ballot on the adoption of a strike policy was shelved on the initiative of the General Secretary, who said that, however unwise it would be to adopt the strike policy at present, it was highly undesirable that the Association should bind itself to a refusal ever to strike, since circumstances might arise in which extreme action might become imperative—say the abolition of the Railway Clearing House, not accompanied by the absorption of its staff by reduction of hours elsewhere.

It is clear that, if the R.C.A. is not ripe for a strike, it is not ripe for fusion with the N.U.R., which would imply the adoption of that policy.

But though amalgamation may be still some way off, isolation is already a thing of the past. In December, 1913, the two Executives met to consider their policy in common. The result was an agreement by which the R.C.A. promised to restrain its members from blacklegging during strikes by doing the work of the operative grades, while the N.U.R. promised in return to see that R.C.A. members were not penalised as a result of their refusal. This is a decision of the greatest importance; for the chief practical reason in favour of immediate amalgamation has been the danger that the companies might use the clerks as blacklegs during strikes. Once this danger is removed, the immediate interest of the N.U.R. is not so much to get the clerks into their own Union as to get as many of the clerks as possible organised somewhere, and therefore no longer dangerous as potential blacklegs. Amalgamation is henceforth rather a matter for the R.C.A. to consider in its own interest; for it has always been urged by those who advocate it that the bargaining power of the 50,000 organised clerks would be greatly increased by union with the 300,000 members of the operative grades who belong to the N.U.R.[1]

It is impossible to dismiss the question of closer unity between the R.C.A. and the N.U.R. without considering what Mr. H. Romeril, in his presidential address at the 1914 Congress, described as an "alternative proposal." The question is often asked whether it is better for railway clerks to join hands with other railwaymen in order to fight the companies which employ them all, or to link up with other clerical workers, commercial, postal, municipal, in-

[1] At the R.C.A. Conference in May, 1917, the following resolution was passed: "That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee to enter immediately into negotiations with the National Union of Railwaymen, to consider conditions under which the two Unions could amalgamate and then issue full particulars of such conditions to all members of the R.C.A."

surance and the like. The proposal to create a Federation of Clerks was in fact the theme of Mr. Romeril's address. "I see," he said, "no reason why in our day and generation we should not create a Federation of Clerks that would become as powerful and influential in industrial and political life as the Miners' Federation."[1]

The comparison was, from his own point of view, unfortunate; but it serves to point the opposition of ideas. The Miners' Federation is a great *industrial* organisation which aims at including all who work in the mining industry; it is therefore similar in type to a great railway Union including, or aiming at including, all railway workers. Mr. Romeril, on the other hand, was urging the formation of a great craft or *occupational* organisation, including all clerks, no matter to what industry they belong. Moreover, the comparison was unfortunate in a second particular: the Miners' Federation is not, in Mr. Romeril's sense, a Federation at all. It is nearer to being a National Industrial Union consisting of *local* industrial branches with considerable local freedom; whereas a Federation of Clerks would consist of a number of *national* Unions, each catering for a distinct type of workers—postal, insurance, commercial, railway, &c.

The very infelicity of Mr. Romeril's comparison is, however, a fortunate accident; for it serves to show that his "alternative proposals" are not in any real sense alternative. A Federation of Clerks such as he advocates need in no way interfere with the progress of Industrial Unionism; for, even if the Railway Clerks went into the N.U.R., they would form in it a separate section, and might affiliate as a section to a Federation of Clerks, as to-day the National Union of General Workers are affiliated, for those of their members who are engaged in transport, to the Transport Workers' Federation. In just the same way, the Postal and Telegraph Clerks, who are represented on the Joint Committee of Postal Unions, and who may well some day form part of a single Postal Industrial Union, could easily remain affiliated, as a section of that Union, to a Federation of Clerks.

Indeed, this double affiliation is already in being. On the initiative of the R.C.A., the various clerical Unions came together at the beginning of the European war, and formed an Emergency Joint Committee, which seems likely to develop into the permanent Federation of Clerks advocated by Mr. Romeril.

Clearly, as the R.C.A. has always maintained, there is a strong bond of interest among all clerks, as well as among all railway workers. Not a single Union, such as the National Union of Clerks, but a Federation, representing all sections of clerical

[1] In his Presidential address to the 1915 Conference, Mr. Romeril modified this statement by saying: "I had no intention of developing the idea of a federation of clerks to the exclusion of the idea of a federation or amalgamation of Railway Trade Unions. I am in favour of the closest possible working between the Railway Trade Unions."

workers, is the right body to work out problems of salaries, hours, holidays and conditions of service in their special relation to the life of the clerk. Industrial Unionists may well be warm advocates of this principle of unity among clerks, provided it expresses itself by means of federation and not amalgamation. The railway industry demands amalgamation: but no less does the clerical occupation demand federation.

In the present case, there is no fear of an amalgamation of all clerical workers into a single Union. Postal clerks are too closely connected with other postal workers to make such a scheme possible, not to mention the fact that they, in common with the Second Division Civil Service Clerks, will be kept on the straight road towards Industrial Unionism by the refusal of their employer, the Government, to recognise Unions admitting workers in private employment. Railway clerks, too, have interests so clearly belonging to the railways that, favourable as they may be to federation, they would never enter a clerical amalgamation. For instance, the senior railway employee cannot leave the railway service, since, even apart from the pension he has in prospect, his training is highly specialised and fits him only for railway work. Even among the junior clerks, a considerable portion of those who pass out of the service do not pass into other clerical occupations, but emigrate. This emigration accounts for a great deal of the leakage in the R.C.A. membership. The ties between railway clerks and other clerks are therefore not such as to lead to an amalgamation movement, which could only arise if railway clerks passed freely into other branches of clerical work. The Federation of Clerks will remain a Federation; and, as such, it has no quarrel with the Industrial Unionists.

It would not be fair to suggest that all the opposition in the R.C.A. to fusion with the N.U.R. comes simply from backwardness and lack of class-consciousness. In this connection, an argument which we have mentioned already as coming from the locomotive men, recurs with equal force. It is urged that the operative grades do not understand the peculiar grievances and, still more, the peculiar needs of the clerical staff. A porter, it is said, is apt to regard as overpaid any employee who gets more money than he himself can hope to get, or who has longer holidays, or shorter hours, or more comfortable working conditions. Fusion with the operative grades, on this showing, would mean "levelling down," and the clerical workers would find their interests neglected in general forward movements. It cannot be denied that there is something in this argument, though the N.U.R. has largely counteracted it by the sectional organisation which has been described. The difficulty is one which has to be got over wherever skilled and unskilled combine in one organisation, or at all events wherever there are in one Union grades so distinct that passage from one to another is not a matter of time and promotion: but,

as we have seen in the case of the locomotive engineers, the way to confront the problem seems rather that of sectional organisation within a single Union than that of separate sectional Unions. The big battalions count for so much in modern industrial warfare that the principle of Industrial Unionism must take the first place.

The difficulty would arise in a concrete form if the clerical workers decided to seek inclusion in the amended conciliation scheme towards which the railway Unions are feeling their way. In the R.C.A., this question has so far hardly arisen, and an amendment urging the Association to seek admission to the scheme failed to find a seconder at the Annual Conference of 1914. It is, however, clear that, if this question should come to the front, the same disputes concerning sectional and composite boards as now divide the N.U.R. from the A.S.L.E. and F. are likely to recur, unless a settlement satisfactory to all parties has previously been reached. There is the more hope that this will be the case, as there is little likelihood that the question will become pressing for a long time to come.

The relation of the R.C.A. to the demand of the other railway Unions for "recognition" is of more immediate importance. At the 1914 Conference, a resolution was moved by 15 branches authorising the Executive, "either independently or in conjunction with other railway Unions," to press for recognition of the R.C.A. Though the resolution was carried unanimously, the Treasurer, Mr. Roberts, expressing the view of the Executive, dwelt on the unripeness of the Association for an aggressive movement in favour of recognition, so long as it included only a minority of the clerical workers. "The first principle of recognition we have to fight for," he said, "is the recognition of the R.C.A. by the railway clerks of the country." Recognition by the companies, he held, would come as soon as the R.C.A. was sufficiently strong and representative. If Mr. Roberts was right, it seems evident that the R.C.A. is now ripe for full recognition.

Though general recognition has not yet been won, the R.C.A. was, even before the war, already informally recognised in a good many cases, which forms a welcome contrast to the attitude previously maintained by the railway companies.

So far we have been considering in the main the relations between the R.C.A. and the other railway Unions, and the R.C.A.'s attitude to demands which are being made by the N.U.R. We have now to review very briefly the policy pursued by the R.C.A. itself. In a recent leaflet there is a review of what the Association has actually accomplished, and from this we select the chief points. Salaries have been appreciably raised and hours diminished; payment has been secured in many cases for special overtime, and in all cases for clerical Sunday work; better holidays have been won, and exemption from the Insurance Act obtained; the management of the various superannuation funds has been reformed; and un-

reasonable dismissals due to combination in railway working arrangements have been in many cases prevented.

Along these lines the work of the Association is still proceeding, and the best course will be to take the most important points in turn. On the question of salaries, the R.C.A. aims at "securing the adoption of rates approximate to those obtaining in the Postal Service, including proportionately higher salaries for members of the staff in positions of more than ordinary responsibility." It has drawn up an elaborate standard scale of salaries, ranging from a country minimum of £30 and a London minimum of £40 at 16 years of age to minima of £150 and £165 at 37. At 21 years of age, the country scale stands at £70 and the London scale at £80. They reach £100 at 27 and 25 respectively, and stand at 30 at £115 and £130. The adoption of this graduated scale brought it into dispute with the National Union of Clerks, which used to advocate a flat minimum rate of 35s., but uniformly failed to enforce it. These two rival salary movements stood to some extent in the way of joint action by the clerical Unions. The 35s. minimum of the N.U.C. was once endorsed by the Trade Union Congress; but the R.C.A. got the resolution rescinded at a recent Congress, and the N.U.C. is now endeavouring to establish graduated scales like those of the R.C.A.

Since the R.C.A. has not adopted a strike policy, it has to adopt other methods of enforcing its demands on the companies. In addition to the platform and press publicity already mentioned, it has placed considerable reliance upon the blocking of Railway Bills in the House of Commons, which has certainly proved a very effective method in many cases, notably in the 1914 salaries movement on the Great Eastern Railway. It has forced upon the public notice the obstinate and tyrannical attitude of the companies, as well as the shamefully low salaries which the majority of railway clerks receive. In this connection, the co-operation of the Labour Party has undoubtedly been of the greatest use to the R.C.A., and Mr. Wardle especially has served it well. It is not sufficiently recognised that the successful blocking of a Bill means unremitting activity day by day, sometimes for weeks on end. The extensive use of such a method would be impossible without an organised party to carry it through. This fact is not unconnected with the eagerness of the R.C.A. to see Mr. Walkden, its General Secretary, member for West Wolverhampton.

But, useful as this method has been, it will hardly be denied that many members of the Association have set an exaggerated value upon it. It is a weapon which grows blunt with use, and of which, if the workers use it too freely, they may soon find themselves robbed. The suggestion made by five branches at the Annual Conference that the R.C.A. should have every railway Bill blocked until its scale of salaries was adopted by all railway companies, would therefore run the risk of defeating the end it had

in view. Bill blocking is a very effective occasional weapon; but it can only retain its effectiveness by remaining occasional.

Along with the salaries movement go various subsidiary demands. Payment for Sunday duty has not yet been secured for stationmasters on all lines: and much overtime is still unpaid. A strong resolution was passed at the 1914 Conference against the bonus system adopted by some companies, and the combination of the R.C.A. scale of salaries with full payment for overtime was urged as an alternative. These demands form part of the hours movement, of which the chief clause urges the adoption of a 42 hours week for day duty, and a 37 hours week for night duty.

One of the most important features in the policy of the R.C.A. is its attitude towards the various Railway Superannuation Funds, which, as we have seen, play an important part in hindering it from adopting a strike policy. These are funds, partly contributory, but heavily subsidised by the companies, for providing pensions for retired railway clerks. As in the case of most "benevolent" schemes run by employers, it is clear that the companies' contributions to these funds are also really paid by the workers in the form of reduced salaries. None the less, they have been in many cases administered from above, and the workers have not been represented upon the Committees that manage them. In view of the discontent aroused by their undemocratic character and actuarial unsoundness, the Government, under pressure from the R.C.A., appointed in 1908 a Committee to enquire into them. As a result, most of the schemes now provide for equal representation of the employees with the directors, though the Great Northern for some time refused any such concession. One of the important works of the Association is now to get its representatives elected on the Committees of Management with a view to the reform of the schemes in the interest of the contributors, and a resolution to this effect was carried at the 1914 Conference. Reference has already been made to the hold which these funds give the companies over the clerks, since a clerk who strikes may well, under the present system, be held to have forfeited his claim to a pension by leaving the company's service. This was similar to the question in dispute, as we saw, between the clerks and the Great Central Railway, but in this case the clerks' membership in the Superannuation Fund was broken by a lock-out on the part of the company, and not by a strike.

We are now in a position to summarise the general programme of the R.C.A. It concentrates in the main on its salaries and hours campaign; it demands the Government inspection of railway offices; and it urges the democratisation and better administration of railway superannuation funds. It makes a special effort to bring into its ranks, and to improve the conditions of, stationmasters and the higher grades of the clerical service; and lastly, as we shall see, it demands the nationalisation of railways.

CHAPTER XIX.

Women Clerks

A SPECIAL problem which is of growing importance remains to be considered and has been brought into special prominence by conditions created by the war. This is the employment of women clerks at rates lower than those paid to the men who do the same work. Complaints on this head came up at the 1913 Conference, where a resolution demanding equal pay for equal work and protesting against the preferential treatment accorded to women was carried. In 1914 a more explicit resolution was carried, in which it was stated that the employment of women under the male rates "tends to depress the general standard of clerical remuneration."

The complaint is thus two-fold. In the first place, the introduction of low-paid female labour is clearly a menace both to the permanency of employment and to the standard rates of the men. It was, however, already recognised by the R.C.A. before the war that women could not be kept out, and they therefore extended their salaries movement to both sexes, and demanded equal rates of payment, in the hope, possibly, of keeping down the number of women employed, or, to put it more justly, with the object of preventing unfair competition.

The problem of the employment of women during the war has been much more serious for the Railway Clerks' Association than for the other railway Unions. In the clerical staff there had already, before the war, been something over 2,000 females, and clerical work in general was nothing new as an occupation for women. Thus, as the male workers enlisted there was an easy and rapid influx of women to fill their places. This went steadily on throughout the war, until by the autumn of 1916, there were over 14,000 women employed on clerical work by the railway companies. The efforts of the Railway Clerks' Association, during this time, were directed to organising these newcomers (the Railway Clerks' Association had always opened its ranks to women), securing that their rate approximated as nearly as possible to the men's rate, and attempting to obtain a bonus for them. The organisation of the women clerks was given an impetus by the great progress of the Railway Clerks' Association during the war. In 1915 alone the membership increased from 29,394 to 42,654, and with the increase in membership there was easily discernible an increase in spirit. This spirit was challenged in November, 1915, by an

attempt to stop the spread of trade unionism amongst women clerks. Several Great Central women clerks in the Chief Goods' Managers' office at Marylebone, on admitting that they belonged to the Railway Clerks' Association, and did not intend to resign from it, were summarily and ostentatiously transferred to the Goods' Agents' office, where salaries are on a lower scale. The Secretary of the Railway Clerks' Association wrote to Sir Sam Fay, the General Manager of the Great Central Railway. No reply was received, and the President of the Board of Trade was approached by the Union, while a question was asked in Parliament by Mr. G. J. Wardle, M.P. The Board of Trade stated that it was informed there had been a rule that membership of the Railway Clerks' Association was not allowed in an administrative office where the work was of a confidential nature, and at the same time Sir Sam Fay sent a circular letter to members of the House of Commons in which he pooh-poohed the whole matter, observing

> "and all this is at the period of the greatest struggle in our national history, when the energy of every man and woman should be devoted to the art or practice of killing Germans."

The issue was a debate in the House of Commons initiated by Mr. Wardle; but no arrangement was come to with the company.

A month later there occurred a case on the London and South Western Railway Company, where women clerks were required to sign a document undertaking not to join any society or association without the permission of the management. This stipulation was withdrawn as a result of a question by Mr. Wardle in the House of Commons. But the Railway Clerks' Association protested that it was not an isolated instance, but evidence of collusion on anti-trade union lines between the Great Central and the South Western. What may be regarded as a sequel to the Great Central trouble at Marylebone was a libel action brought by an official of the Great Central against the *Railway Clerk*. The defence of the *Railway Clerks'* Counsel was that the libel action was not *bona-fide*, but was an attempt by the Railway Company to smash the *Railway Clerk*. The action was successful and damages of £600 were awarded. Needless to say, this Law Court case greatly embittered the already unfriendly relations between the Union and the Railway Company. The campaign to organise the women went steadily forward, and in July, 1916, a Special Conference of representatives of the women members was held in Leeds. Partly as a result of the improved methods of organising, suggested at this conference, the women clerks were enabled, at the end of the year, to receive, though not universally, a bonus of 5s. where the other railway women were getting 3s. But the advantage is not so great as it appears, because the women clerks, unlike the other railway women were in very few cases receiving the minimum rate of the male workers they had displaced.

CHAPTER XX.

The Control of Industry

We have left to the end of this book one question of great importance, which affects equally every class of railway workers. For years the railway Trade Unions have been closely connected with the Railway Nationalisation Society and have passed at many Conferences resolutions in favour of the nationalisation of railways. In 1914 there was for the first time an important innovation in one of the resolutions. The R.C.A. resolution pointed out the wastefulness of the present system, and proceeded to urge nationalisation in the interests of the community. The N.U.R. resolution, on the other hand, took for the first time the following form :—

> "That this Congress, while reaffirming previous decisions in favour of the nationalisation of railways and approving the action of the Executive Committee in arranging to obtain and give evidence before the Royal Commission, declares that no system of State ownership of the railways will be acceptable to organised railwaymen which does not guarantee to them their full political and social rights, allow them a due measure of control and responsibility in the safe and efficient working of the railway system, and assure to them a fair and equitable participation of the increased benefits likely to accrue from a more economical and scientific administration."

We find in this resolution a definite demand for the combination with nationalisation of the granting of a measure of control over the industry to the workers engaged in it.

This new form of the N.U.R. resolution should not be taken as indicating that it is in this respect necessarily ahead of the R.C.A. The resolution we have quoted is, in comparison with the demands formulated by advocates of National Guilds, and still more with those of the Industrial Unionists, a very half-hearted affair, and makes a claim that is far from explicit. It is important mainly as a sign of the times, an indication of the growing feeling that the mere advent of nationalisation will not by itself usher in the millennium. That this being realised no less in the R.C.A. is shown by the presidential address at the 1913 Conference in which explicit proposals were made for a system of

joint control resembling that now urged by the Railway Nationalisation Society. Mr. Romeril there urged the appointment of "a National Railway Board, made up of three principal elements; one-third to consist of representatives of the users of the railways, to be elected by such bodies as the Associated Chambers of Commerce; one-third of Members of Parliament, including a Minister of Railways who would act as President of the Board—and all in this section appointed by the Government of the day and subject to being changed with a change of Government; and the remaining third to be composed of elected representatives of the railway workers."

Since then, the matter has been carried very much further. At the 1915 Trades Union Congress, on the motion of the National Joint Committee of Post Office Associations, the following resolution was carried unanimously :—

> "This Congress expresses the opinion that nationalisation of public services, such as the Post Office, is not necessarily advantageous to the employés and the working classes unless accompanied by steadily increasing democratic control, both by the employés and the representatives of the working classes in the House of Commons. It, therefore, pledges itself to work steadily to develop public opinion in both these directions."

At the 1916 Congress, a resolution dealing with the railways was moved by the R.C.A., seconded by the A.S.L.E. and F., and carried by an enormous majority with the support of the N.U.R. The first clause is what concerns us here :—

> "That this Congress calls upon the Government to nationalise the railways completely, and at the same time arrange for the Trade Unions concerned to have such a share in the management of the railway system as will enable railway workers to have a real voice in the control of the conditions of their life and work."

The last resolution[1] we need quote is one carried by a National Conference of N.U.R. District Councils on January 7th, 1917 :—

> "That this Conference, seeing that the railways are being controlled by the State for the benefit of the nation during the war, is of opinion that they should not revert to private ownership afterwards. Further, we believe that national welfare

[1] To show that these resolutions are part of a general tendency, it is worth while to quote the following declaration issued by the French National Union of Railwaymen in 1916 :—

"The National Union, in conformity with the decisions come to at the National Congresses, and more particularly at the 24th National Congress, declares itself to be in favour of the nationalisation of railways.

demands that they should be acquired by the State to be jointly controlled and managed by the State and representatives of the National Union of Railwaymen."

This is not the place for a full discussion of the merits of the various projects for giving the workers a share in the control of industry—from Syndicalism and Industrial Unionism, with

"In doing this, it does not in any way mean that 'Statifying' the various public departments is the economic formula which would sweep away the tares of existing society and inaugurate a reign of full justice and social equity.

"But it considers that the working by the State, provided that certain principles are applied, should, as regards the railways, lead to considerable improvement, as much for the public commerce and industry as for the staff.

"Further, the National Union considers that nationalisation is one step—which cannot be dispensed with—towards the object pursued by Syndicalism.

"Wishing—in order successfully to carry on the campaign it is undertaking—to make an appeal to the whole working classes, organised in its Trade Unions and its departmental Trades Councils, and taking into consideration that certain militants declare themselves anti-Statists, the National Union wishes first of all to declare that it pursues nationalisation on the following conditions:—

"1. That the nationalised service be accorded complete autonomy, it being understood that a great nationalised service ought only to have for its object the administration of things. The profits realised by any one department should only serve to improve the conditions of transport of passengers and goods, and to establish better working conditions and salaries for the staff.

"2. That the staff be called upon to take part in the management of the railway, which implies that the employees should be grouped in their professional organisations.

"The example of the present State railway is already one to be remembered. A district board and a manager are responsible for the management; but we must secure that they are not dependent on Ministers or politicians.

"Concerning the part taken by the employees in the management, there is at present only the embryo of a satisfactory arrangement, four members only representing the staff, being nominated by the Minister to the Board of the district.

"3. That the public—travellers, tradesmen, and manufacturers—are equally called upon to collaborate, the necessity of this being more and more felt, and the results of which are already known as regards certain questions. The initiative taken by such Societies as the Touring Club and the Automobile Club, concerning the notices placarded on the sides of the roads, proves what private initiative can do for public services.

"These three conditions being fixed, it appeared to the National Union that our comrades, who, either in the bosom of the National Union, or in that of the C.G.T., declare themselves anti-Statists, can conform to the idea of nationalisation, by recognising that a railway district worked in the manner indicated above, incontestably presents a superiority from the point of view of all the interests at stake, over the working of a private company, which is led fatally to neglect in a large measure the interests of the public and of the staff, in order to satisfy its shareholders by producing larger and larger dividends, more and more important.

"On the other hand, the National Union affirms the necessity for the staff, in a like case, to maintain a professional organisation remaining always in the bosom of the C.G.T., and not losing sight of the constant solidarity with the rest of the proletariat and the indispensable educational effort at a complete transformation of society."

their complete system of producers' control, to those schemes which would give the workers a small representation upon boards of management. The above resolutions and presidential address are quoted only as showing the tendency in the Railway Trade Union world to adopt, in one form or another, the demand for a share in control. If we may judge by the tendency of the more recent resolutions, it seems clear that the railwaymen are moving towards the solution of National Guilds—the control of their industry by the railwaymen themselves acting in conjunction with a democratised State.

In this connection, one last point may be noted. In discussing the question of the fusion of the railway Unions, we advisedly laid little stress on the consideration of the control of industry. It is, however, obvious that, if the workers are to take an effective part in the management of their industry, they must be united in a single Industrial Union. Strong as the case for amalgamation is on the ground of mere fighting efficiency, the impossibility of exercising effective control except through a complete Industrial Union including all grades of railway workers is, in the minds of many of its supporters, the ultimate argument in its favour. It may be regarded as certain that this aspect of the question will come continually more to the front in future discussions of railway Trade Unionism.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

Directory of Railway Associations

I.—TRADE UNIONS.

National Union of Railwaymen:
J. H. Thomas, M.P., Unity House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1 (T.N.: Museum 63; T.A.: Beware, Eusquare, London.)

Railway Clerks' Association of Great Britain and Ireland:
A. G. Walkden, 25 Euston Road, London, N.W.1 (T.N.: Holborn 633; T.A.: Foreshadow, Kincross, London.)

Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen:
J. Bromley, 8 Park Square, Leeds. (T.N.: Central 3588; T.A.: Associated, Leeds.)

Irish Railway Workers' Trade Union:
J. S. Kelly, 43 Lombard Street, West, Dublin.

Belfast and Dublin Locomotive Engine Drivers and Firemen's Trade Union:
W. Reid, 79 Ravenhill Road, Belfast.

National Union of Railway Clerks:
A. E. Chandler, 23 Abbey Lane, Woodseats, Sheffield. (T.N.: Beauchief, 160, Sheffield.)

II.—EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

Railway Clearing House, Seymour Street, Euston Square, N.W.1
Railway Companies' Association, 53 Parliament Street, S.W.1
Railway Shareholders' Association, 57 Moorgate Street, London, E.C.
Railway Executive Committee, 35 Parliament Street, S.W.1.

III.—PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

The Institution of Locomotive Engineers, 46 Malling Street, Lewes.
Association of Railway Companies' Signal Superintendents and Signal Engineers, Midland Railway Signal Works, Derby.
The Institution of Railway Signal Engineers, Telegraph Department, Midland Railway, Derby.
Association of Railway Locomotive Engineers, Hon. Secretary, Mr. Henry Fowler, Chief Mechanical Engineer, Midland Railway.

IV.—MISCELLANEOUS.

Railway and Canal Commission, 108 and 227 Royal Courts of Justice.
Railway Department, Board of Trade, 7 Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1
Inspectors of Railways, 8 Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, S.W.1
Railway Benevolent Institution, 12 Euston Square, London, N.W.1
United Kingdom Railway Officers' and Servants' Association, 21 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.
Railwaymen's Welfare Association (Incorporated), 4 and 6 Bath Bridge, Bristol.
Railway Guards' Universal Friendly Society, 167 Strand, W.C.2.
The Railwaymen's Convalescent Homes, 116 Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.1
Railway Nationalisation Society, Trafalgar Buildings, Charing Cross, W.C.2.

APPENDIX B.

Railway Representatives in Parliament

	Directors	Trade Unionists
House of Lords	48	... 0
House of Commons	32	... 3
	80	... 3

APPENDIX C.

Outline of Scheme for Conciliation and Arbitration

(Extracted from the Agreement of November 6th, 1907).

GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

(a) Boards to be formed for each railway company which adheres to the scheme to deal with questions referred to them, either by the company or its employees, relating to the rates of wages and hours of labour of any class of employees to which the scheme applies, which cannot be mutually settled through the usual channels.

(b) The various grades of the employees of the company who are covered by the scheme, to be grouped for this purpose in a suitable number of sections, and the area served by the company to be divided, if necessary, for purposes of election, into a number of suitable districts.

(c) The employees belonging to each section so grouped to choose from among themselves one or more representatives for each district, these representatives to form the employees' side of a sectional board to meet representatives of the company to deal with rates of wages and hours of labour exclusively affecting grades of employees within that section.

(d) The first election of representatives to be conducted in a manner set out in the Rules of Procedure. Subsequent elections to be regulated by the boards themselves.

(e) Where a sectional board fails to arrive at a settlement, the question to be referred on the motion of either side to the Central Conciliation Board, consisting of representatives of the company and one or more representatives chosen from the employees' side of each sectional board.

(f) In the event of the Conciliation Boards being unable to arrive at an agreement, or the Board of Directors or the men failing to carry out the recommendations, the subject of difference to be referred to arbitration. The reference shall be to a single arbitrator appointed by agreement between the two sides of the Board, or in default of agreement to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Master of the Rolls, or in the unavoidable absence or inability of one of them to act, then by the remaining one. The decision of the arbitrator shall be binding on all parties.

DURATION OF SCHEME.

The present scheme to be in force until twelve months after notice has been given by one side to the other to terminate it. No such notice to be given within six years of the present date.

INTERPRETATION.

If any question should arise as to the interpretation of this scheme, it shall be decided by the Board of Trade, or at the request of either party, by the Master of the Rolls.

OUTLINE OF SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION AND PROCEDURE OF CONCILIATION BOARDS.

N.B.—The following outline is intended as a general "model," to be amended in detail to suit the circumstances of particular companies :—

CONSTITUTION OF BOARDS OF CONCILIATION.

Boards to be constituted in the first place for the more important sections (the list to be subject to modification to suit particular railways).

The following are suggested merely as examples :—

Railway A.

(1) Locomotive drivers, firemen and cleaners.
(2) Signalmen, pointsmen, &c.
(3) Permanent-way men, platelayers, &c.
(4) Traffic department men other than signalmen.

Railway B.

(1) Locomotive drivers, firemen and cleaners.
(2) Signalmen and pointsmen.
(3) Goods guards and shunters.
(4) Passenger department guards, ticket examiners, shunters, and porters.
(5) Telegraph and permanent way.
(6) Goods checkers, porters, carmen, vanmen, stablemen, and labourers.

NOTE.—Variations may be made in the above classification, care being taken to provide, so far as possible, for the inclusion of other grades of wage-earning employees engaged in the manipulation of traffic on one or other of the boards.

If the employees belonging to any section not included at the outset should desire hereafter to participate in the scheme, they may make application to the Central Board, which, if it thinks desirable, may either admit them to an existing sectional board or arrange for the constitution of a new board.

The electoral districts to be based so far as practicable on districts already in existence for the purpose of the railway company (*e.g.*, District Superintendents' or District Goods Managers' districts), which may if necessary be grouped for the purpose.

(NOTE.—It seems desirable that the districts should be as few as possible (preferably not more than *four*, and in no case exceeding *six*), in order to admit of *two* operative representatives instead of only *one* being elected for each district on each board. This will give opportunity for variety of representation, *e.g.*, for a fireman as well as an engine driver to be elected on Board I., without unduly increasing the number of members of the boards).

The term of office of a Conciliation Board to be three years. Casual vacancies through death, resignation, or loss of qualification to be filled by co-option by the remaining members on the same side of the board.

ELECTION OF CONCILIATION BOARDS.

The following rules to apply to the first election. Subsequent elections to be regulated by the Conciliation Boards themselves :—

(1) Nomination papers proposing candidates for the various boards signed by not less than 20 *adult employees* belonging to the same section and district to be sent to the Board of Trade on or before a date to be arranged.

(2) The Board, after satisfying themselves that the nominations are in order, to prepare voting papers and arrange for them to be circulated to the adult employees on a given pay day.

(3) The Board of Trade to receive and count the voting papers of the men, and also to receive from the company a list of its proposed representatives on the various boards.[1] The result to be published with as little delay as possible.

(NOTE.—For the purpose of these rules "adult" means a person aged 20 and upwards.)

PROCEDURE.

Each side of a Conciliation Board to select its own chairman.

Every board to meet for business as required at the request of either side. A fortnight's notice to be given of all meetings. No meeting shall be called in August or September.

Meetings to be convened by the secretary, who shall be appointed by agreement between the two sides of the board. Failing agreement each side to appoint a secretary from among the employees of the company. The agenda to be circulated with the notices, and no question not on the agenda to be brought up except with the consent of both sides.

Each side of a board to vote separately, and all decisions to be arrived at by agreement between the two sides.

MODE OF DEALING WITH APPLICATIONS.

Before a Conciliation Board can entertain any proposal for a change in the rates of wages or hours of labour of any class of employees, an application for such change must previously have been made in the usual course through the officers of the department concerned.

After any such application has been made by the employees they shall be informed, as soon as practicable, and in any case within two months, of the company's decisions with regard to the request or of their desire to refer it to a Conciliation Board. In the event of the decision not being accepted or of no reply being received within the specified time, the men may require the matter to be referred to a Conciliation Board, which shall be at once convened to consider the matter so referred.

NOTE.—For the purpose of this rule, the months of August and September shall not count.

Any proposal agreed to by a Conciliation Board involving increased expenditure shall be placed before the directors for their acceptance at their next ordinary board meeting, or, if that meeting takes place within a week of the proposal, then at the next meeting but one, and failing this shall be referred forthwith to arbitration.

Any proposal agreed to by a Conciliation Board involving a reduction of rates of wages shall be communicated to the men, and if rejected by them within a month shall be referred forthwith to arbitration.

Subject to the above provisos the decision of a Conciliation Board to be final and binding on the parties, and no decision to be re-opened within 12 months.

Where a sectional board fails to arrive at a settlement, the question to be referred on the motion of either side to the Central Conciliation Board.

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[1] It is desirable that at least one of the company's representatives on each board should be a director.

Should the Central Conciliation Board fail to agree, the question to go forthwith to arbitration at the request of either party.

Proceedings before the arbitrator shall be regulated by him, including the period during which the award shall be binding.

EXPENSES.

In the absence of an agreement to the contrary the expenses of arbitration proceedings and Conciliation Boards to be divided equally between the company and its employees

NOTE.—It is agreed that in order to keep procedure simple and inexpensive, counsel should not appear in these cases.

APPENDIX D.

North-Eastern Railway Conciliation Scheme.

FUNCTIONS.

Objects.—To prevent or put an end to disputes between the company and their employees, by free discussion of questions affecting hours, wages, and conditions of service, between officers of the company and the men, by means of a duly constituted Conference, with a view to the settlement of such questions by agreement.

Any question relating to the hours, wages, or other conditions of service of the men of any grade or section of a grade covered by Clause 4 (see Constitution—Representation), of which due notice had been given, may be placed upon the agenda by the secretaries for discussion. But all such questions (other than general questions affecting all departments) must have first been raised and considered through the departmental officers concerned, and no question involving discipline will be taken into consideration by the Conference.

CONSTITUTION.

Representation.—The Conference to consist of :—

(a) Eighteen representatives elected by the men as explained below.

(b) Officers representing the company, not more than eighteen in number, to be nominated by the directors.

For electoral purposes the line to be divided into two districts, viz., northern and southern. The northern district to be the whole of the North-Eastern system north of the River Tees. The southern district to be the whole of the North-Eastern system south of the River Tees.

The representatives of the men to be elected by and from the permanent wages staff employed in the working of the railway, of 18 years of age and upwards, with not less than 12 months' service, and to be distributed amongst the different grades as indicated below :—

	Northern	Southern	Total
Locomotive Department			
Drivers, Firemen and other running staff ...	2	2	4
Traffic Departments			
Signalmen	1	1	2
Guards and Shunters (Passenger and Goods) ...	1	1	2
Passenger Station Staff	1	1	2
Goods Station Staff	2	2	4
Engineering Department			
Permanent Way Men	2	2	4
	9	9	18

Vacancies.—Casual vacancies among the 18 elected representatives to be filled up by the remaining representatives from the same grade as the man whose place has become vacant.

Terms of Office.—Representatives on the Conference to be elected every three years.

Duration of Conference.—The Conference to remain in force until six months after notice has been given by one side to the other to terminate it. No such notice to be given within three years of the first election.

Secretaries.—Each side of the Conference to appoint its own secretary, who may or may not be a person in the service of the company, and who shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the Conference and take part in the proceedings.

PROCEDURE.

Meetings.—The Conference, unless otherwise agreed, to meet in May and November in each year, and at other times as may be agreed.

Agenda.—Notice of any question which it is desired by either side to discuss to reach the secretaries at least four weeks, and the agenda to be circulated two weeks, before each meeting.

Reference to Sub-Committee.—Any question instead of being discussed and settled at the Conference may be remitted by the Conference to a sub-committee, or by arrangement between the secretaries may be so referred to a sub-committee in the first instance. The sub-committee, unless otherwise agreed, to consist of the representatives on the Conference of the department or grade concerned.

FINANCE.

Expenses.—The expenses of the proceedings of the Conference to be equally divided between the company and the employees.

APPENDIX E.

Scheme for dealing with questions affecting Wages, Hours, or Conditions of Service of Railway Employees engaged in the Manipulation of Traffic.

The following scheme, in place of that of 1907, was suggested by the Royal Commission and agreed to by the Railway Conference Agreement of December 11th, 1911, by the undersigned:

STEPS PRELIMINARY TO THE BRINGING OF BUSINESS BEFORE CONCILIATION BOARDS.

1.—Unless otherwise mutually arranged, the procedure laid down in paragraphs 2-8 shall be adopted.

2.—If the employees forming a grade, or combination of grades having a common interest, wish to bring to the notice of the company a matter affecting their rates of wages, hours of labour, or conditions of service, or (at this stage) any questions affecting the contractual relations between the company and its employees, a petition shall be presented signed by at least 25 per cent. of those concerned.[1] The petition shall name a suitable number of employees of the company whom the petitioners desire to form a deputation. The company shall receive the deputation within 14 days from the receipt of the petition and shall give a reply in writing to the petitioners within 28 days of the reception of the deputation.

3.—In the case of a matter which affects one or more individuals, as distinguished from a grade, or concerns one depot only, the application may be made in writing by those affected to the immediate superior of the men, and the company may designate a local superintending officer to hear the applicants within 14 days of the receipt of the application. The reply of the company to the application to be made in writing within 28 days of the conference with the applicants.

4.—In the event of the company's reply in either case not being acceptable, or of no reply being received within the stipulated period, it shall be open to the deputation to require any question relating to rates of wages, hours of labour, or conditions of service, other than matters of management or discipline, to be referred to the appropriate Conciliation Board, by written application to the secretary of the employees' side of that Board.

5.—In the event of the company proposing to reduce the rates of wages, or to increase the hours of labour, or otherwise alter adversely the conditions of service (other than matters of management or discipline) of a class of employees, the company shall circularise the men concerned, stating what

[1] With regard to the signing of the petition by at least 25 per cent. of those concerned, it was agreed that each company shall settle with its employees the question of percentage. For this purpose a special meeting of each Conciliation Board shall be convened. Failing agreement between the two sides of the Board the percentage of 25 laid down in the scheme to apply.

their proposals are, and giving notice that the proposal will be placed on the agenda for the next appropriate meeting of the Conciliation Board. Such circular to be issued to the staff not less than one month before the date of the meeting of the Conciliation Board at which the proposal will be considered.

6.—If the company find it necessary to reduce the rates of wages or increase the hours of labour, or adversely alter the conditions of service of any individual or individuals, as distinct from a class of employees, they shall be at liberty to do so, subject to the man or men concerned having the right (if he or they feel aggrieved) to refer the question, unless it is one relating to matters of management or discipline, to the next meeting of the Conciliation Board.

If, at the meeting of such Board, it is determined that the alteration was not reasonable, the matter shall be adjusted as from the date the alteration was made.

7.—For the purpose of the time limits set out in the preceding rules, the months of August and September shall not be counted.

8.—Petitions and deputations from the employees and proposals by the company shall, when practicable, be made at such dates as, failing agreements between the parties direct, will admit of the subjects of difference being placed on the agenda of the next ordinary meetings of the Conciliation Boards.

ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSTITUTION OF CONCILIATION BOARDS.

9.—There shall be established on each railway a suitable number of Conciliation Boards to deal with questions referred to them relating to the rates of wages, hours of labour, or conditions of service, other than matters of management or discipline, of all wage-earning employees engaged in the manipulation of traffic and in the permanent service of the company.

Employees' Representatives.

10.—For this purpose the various grades of the employees of the company who have a common interest and are covered by this scheme shall be grouped in a suitable number of sections, and the area served by the company shall be divided, if necessary, for the purposes of election into a number of suitable districts.

11.—The employees belonging to each section shall elect, from among themselves, one or more representatives for each district, such representatives to form the employees' side of a Conciliation Board to deal with matters coming within the scope of this scheme and affecting employees included in the section.

12.—The grouping of grades into sections, the division of the company's system into areas, and the number of representatives of employees shall, in the first instance, follow the existing arrangements for Sectional Boards under the Railway Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme of 1907.

13.—In those cases where the elections of employees' representatives have taken place during the year 1911 the term of office of such Boards shall expire on November 6th, 1914, except in those cases where it is found necessary to reorganise the grades coming under the existing Boards. Elections under these conditions, and also in the case of Boards not yet formed, or not re elected during 1911 shall be held as soon as possible.[1]

[1] It was agreed that the first meetings of the Conciliation Boards established under this scheme should not be held prior to May, 1912, except so far as the special meetings necessary to decide the percentage referred to in Clause 2 (Note) are concerned. At the first meetings held in May, 1912, it shall be competent to raise for discussion, after the usual procedure laid down

14.—All elections of representatives of the employees shall be held under the supervision of the Board of Trade and the following rules shall apply:—

(a) Candidates must be employed in the section and district for which they desire to stand.

(b) Nomination papers proposing candidates for the various Boards shall be sent to the Board of Trade not later than a specified day.

(c) Each nomination paper shall be signed by not less than 20 adult employees belonging to the candidate's section and district.[1]

(d) The Board of Trade, after satisfying themselves that the nomination papers are in order, shall prepare voting papers and arrange for them to be circulated among the adult employees on a given pay day.

(e) The Board of Trade shall receive and count the voting papers.

(f) For the purpose of these rules "adult" means a person of not less than 20 years of age.

Company's Representatives.

15.—The company shall furnish to the Board of Trade, not later than the date on which the men's voting papers are to be counted, a list for each Conciliation Board of the persons in the permanent employ of the company from among whom the company will select its representatives on the Conciliation Board. Such list must specify at least two persons who will have permanent seats on the company's side of the Board. The remaining seats on the company's side may be filled by any of the persons named in the company's panel of representatives for the Board in question, provided always that at no time shall the total number of representatives present on the company's side exceed the total membership of the employees' side of the Board.[2]

Publication of Names of Members.

16.—The Board of Trade shall publish for each Board, with as little delay as possible, the names of the members elected to represent the employees and the names of the persons forming the company's panel of representatives, specifying those of the latter who are to have permanent seats.

Term of Office.

17.—The term of office of the first Boards established under this scheme shall expire on November 6th, 1914. Should the scheme be continued, each subsequent Board shall have a term of three years from the date of publication by the Board of Trade of the names of members of such Board.

Casual Vacancies.

18.—Casual vacancies on the employees' side of a Conciliation Board through death, resignation, or loss of qualification, shall be filled by co-optation by the remaining members of that side, the co-opted member to be a permanent employee of the company in the section and district represented by his

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in Clauses 2, 3 and 4 of the scheme has been carried out, any matter included in settlements at present in operation, subject to the proviso that no alteration in such settlements shall operate before July 1st, 1912, as laid down in Clause 47 of the scheme.

[1] The Board of Trade have, in their discretion, in the case of small companies, modified the number of adult employees required to sign the nomination papers. This discretion to be continued.

[2] It was agreed that the words, "in the permanent employ of the company," in line 4, should be read as imposing no restriction on directors sitting upon the Boards.

predecessor. Similar vacancies on the company's side shall be filled by the company.[1]

Modification of Sections, Districts, and Number of Representatives.

19.—Any class of employees falling within the scope of this scheme, but not included at the outset in any Conciliation Board, may make application to the company, by means of a petition signed by at least 25 per cent. of their number, to be included in an existing Board or to have a new Board established. The company shall thereupon arrange to receive a deputation of the petitioners with a view to the decision of the matter, which, in the event of no agreement being arrived at, shall be referred to the Board of Trade.

20.—Any class of employees wishing to be transfrered from one Board to another existing Board, or to a new Board, may make application to the company by petition signed by at least 25 per cent. of their number, and the petition shall be dealt with in the manner indicated in the preceding paragraph.

21.—All differences with regard to the definition or modification of sections, districts, or number of representatives of employees, which cannot be settled by agreement, shall be determined by the Board of Trade.

OFFICERS OF BOARDS.

Chairman.

22.—There shall be for each Conciliation Board a Chairman, who shall not be a director of any Railway Company in the United Kingdom or in the service of any such company. The Chairman of a Conciliation Board shall be selected from a panel to be constituted by the Board of Trade.

23.—As soon as the Conciliation Boards on a company's system have been established, and from time to time when necessary, the employees' side of each Board shall select two of their number to be invested with plenary powers, who shall attend a special combined meeting with an equal or less number of representatives of the company for the purpose of selecting, from the panel mentioned in paragraph 22, the name of a Chairman to be suggested to the Board of Trade for appointment. In the event of failure to agree, the Board of Trade shall nominate the Chairman.

24.—On each occasion that the services of a Chairman are required at a meeting of a Conciliation Board, as provided in paragraph 41 of this Scheme, he shall be appointed under the Conciliation Act, 1896, and the same Chairman shall act for all the Conciliation Boards established on a Company's system during the entire period of office of those Boards whenever practicable.

Leading Members.

25.—Each side of a Conciliation Board shall select its own leading member from among the members of the side. The leading members of the two sides shall, in the absence of the Chairman of the Board, preside alternately at the meetings, unless otherwise mutually arranged.

26.—In case of emergency, and in the event of the Secretary of a side not being available, the leading member of that side shall perform the duties of Secretary.

Secretaries.

27.—Each side of a Conciliation Board shall have a Secretary, who may take part in discussions and act as advocate, if desired, but shall have no vote unless he is a member of the Board.

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[1] It was agreed that co-optation should be employed in the case of vacancies caused by an insufficient number of candidates being properly nominated for election.

28.—The company's Secretary of each Conciliation Board shall be appointed by the company from any source it pleases.

29.—The employees' Secretary shall be chosen by a majority of the employees' side of the Conciliation Board, who may select him from any source they please, and shall determine the length and conditions of his office, subject to the provisions of this Scheme. [1]

PROCEDURE.

Ordinary Meetings.

30.—Every Conciliation Board shall hold two ordinary meetings a year, at intervals of six months.

31.—The date of an ordinary meeting shall be fixed by the Secretaries of the Board, or, failing agreement, by the Chairman.

32.—At least 14 days' notice of the meeting shall be given by each Secretary to the members of his own side.

33.—The agenda shall be agreed upon and signed by the Secretaries of the two sides of the Board, and shall be issued 14 days, before the meeting.

Special Meetings.

34.—Either side of a Conciliation Board may, by letter addressed to the Secretary of the other side, ask for a special meeting to be held within 14 days, the request for a meeting to be accompanied by a statement of the matters to be placed on the agenda.

35.—Should a difference arise as to the date of the special meeting, or as to the necessity for holding it, the difference shall be referred by the two Secretaries to the Chairman, within the 14 days mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The Chairman shall then fix the date of the meeting if any is to be held.

36.—No meeting shall be held in August or September, except by mutual consent.

Agenda.

37.—Any difference arising between the two Secretaries as to the matters to be placed on the Agenda shall be referred to the Chairman for his decision.

38.—No question not on the agenda shall be brought up at any meeting except with the consent of both sides.

Method of Dealing with Applications.

39.—No proposal for an alteration of rates of wages, hours of labour, or conditions of service, shall be entertained by a Conciliation Board until the proposal has been dealt with in the manner set out in paragraphs 1—8, and the company and the employees concerned have failed to come to agreement by direct negotiation.

40.—In the event of such failure to agree on a matter competent to be dealt with under this Scheme, the matter may be placed on the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of the appropriate Conciliation Board by the side representing the party which made the proposal, and it shall be considered at such meeting unless previously withdrawn or placed on the agenda for a special meeting.

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[1] It was agreed that, in the event of the employees' side of a Conciliation Board being unable to agree upon the selection of its leading member or secretary, the question shall be referred to the Board of Trade, who will either decide the matter or take a ballot of the whole of the men employed in the grades represented by the Board.

41.—In the event of the two sides failing to agree at the first meeting at which a matter is considered, it shall be open to either side to adjourn the meeting for 14 days. If no agreement is reached at the adjourned meeting, or if neither side asks for such adjourned meeting, the Chairman of the Board shall be called in to preside over a re-assembled Board, and to give a decision on the matter, if the parties cannot be reconciled.

42.—At meetings presided over by the Chairman, either side may, if it desires, have the services of a special advocate, who is neither member nor Secretary of the Board, but counsel shall not be engaged.

Records of Proceedings.

43.—A record of every meeting of the Board shall be agreed upon and entered in duplicate minute books, one to be kept by each Secretary, and signed by both. Each Secretary shall circulate a copy of the record among those represented by his side of the Board, in such manner as may be determined by the side.[1]

DECISIONS OF BOARDS.

Voting by Sides.

44.—Each side of a Conciliation Board shall vote separately, and, in the absence of the Chairman, all decisions shall be arrived at by agreement between the two sides.

Function of Chairman.

45.—At meetings at which the Chairman is present he shall endeavour to bring the two sides into accord, and, failing this, shall, either at the meeting or within a reasonable time thereafter, give a decision on any matter still at issue.

Decisions to be Final.

46.—All settlements arrived at, by agreement of the two sides or by the decision of the Chairman, shall be final and binding, for their periods of operation, on both the company and the employees, the ratification of neither of these parties being required.

DURATION OF SETTLEMENTS.

Existing Settlements.

47.—All settlements at present in operation, whether arrived at by agreement by Conciliation Boards under the Scheme of 1907, or by arbitration under that Scheme, shall remain in force until July 1st, 1912, and thereafter until they are varied, superseded, or nullified by decisions of Conciliation Boards or Chairmen under the present Scheme.

48.—This clause was deleted.

Future Settlements Under the Present Scheme.

49.—Settlements arrived at by agreement between the two sides of a Conciliation Board shall have effect for at least twelve months.

50.—Settlements by decision of the Chairman of a Board shall have effect for at least two years.

51.—In either case settlements shall be held to continue in operation beyond the minimum period above specified until they are varied, superseded, or nullified by decision of the Conciliation Board arrived at by agreement, or by decision of the Chairman.

52.—Settlements, whether by agreement or by decision of the Chairman,

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[1] It was agreed that the record of meetings entered in the duplicate minute books shall be signed by the leading members of both sides as well as by the Secretaries.

may be varied at any time (before or after the expiration of the minimum periods above mentioned) by mutual consent of the two sides of the Board.

DURATION OF SCHEME.

53.—The present Scheme shall remain in operation until November 6th, 1914, and thereafter be subject to revision or determination, as regards any given company, by twelve months' notice given by the company, or by a majority of the aggregate representatives of employees on all the Conciliation Boards for the company's system. The earliest date at which such notice may be given is November 6th, 1913.

54.—All settlements in force at the period of determination of the Scheme shall continue in operation for the period for which they were made, and thereafter until varied, superseded, or nullified by agreement between the company and the employees, or by such machinery for the settlement of differences as may be hereafter established.

CODIFICATION OF CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

55.—Lists showing the existing rates of wages, hours of labour, and all other conditions of service of the various grades of employees covered by this Scheme, shall be prepared as soon as possible by the company, and printed in a suitable form at its expense.

56.—These lists shall form the basis of the contract between the company and its employees, and copies thereof shall be exhibited by the company without delay in places where they may readily be consulted by the employees concerned, in order that every employee may know precisely what are the conditions of his service.

EXPENSES.

57.—Secretaries of Conciliation Boards shall be allowed free travelling on the company's system when engaged in the execution of their secretarial duties.

58.—All members of a Conciliation Board shall be allowed free travelling on the company's system for the purpose of attending meetings of a Board.

59.—A statement of the results of the election of employees' representatives to a Conciliation Board, the agenda papers, the records of proceedings, and the text of the agreements arrived at, having been prepared and signed by the two Secretaries shall be printed and posted up at the depots, stations, etc., in such a manner as to be accessible for examination by the employees of the company. Copies shall also be supplied to each member of the Board. All this shall be done at the company's expense.

INTERPRETATION.

Interpretation of Settlements.

60.—Any differences which may arise as to the interpretation of settlements whether arrived at by agreement between the two sides of a Conciliation Board or by decision of the Chairman, shall in the first instance be considered by the two Secretaries, and in case of difference be referred to the Board, which shall be summoned within 14 days.

61.—Requests by employees for interpretation by a Conciliation Board shall be made through the Secretary of the employees' side, who shall decline them or bring them before the Board in accordance with general or special directions from the employees' side of the Board.

62.—Applications by the company for interpretation by a Conciliation Board shall be made through the Secretary of the company's side of the Board.

63.—Any questions of interpretation, on which the Board fail to agree, shall be dealt with at an adjourned meeting at which the Chairman shall be present, the decision of the Chairman on points of difference to be final.

INTERPRETATION OF SCHEME.

64.—If any question should arise as to the interpretation of this scheme it shall be decided by the Board of Trade.

65.—Requests for interpretation of the scheme shall be signed by both Secretaries of the Board concerned. In the event of disagreement the Chairman shall confer with the Secretaries and settle the form of application to the Board of Trade.

NOTE.

Upon the representatives of the men's side raising the question of the alteration of trip rates by the railway companies, it was explained that the companies must retain the right to vary trip rates according to varying circumstances, but it was stated that in case of the men not being satisfied as to the reasonableness of any such alteration of trip rates in a downward direction, the matter could be referred in the ordinary course to the next meeting of the Conciliation Board, it being understood that if it was determined that such a reduction was not reasonable, the matter should be adjusted from the date of alteration.

JOINT STAFF.

It was agreed that joint staff, where there is no separate Conciliation Board, shall be allocated to one or other of the owning companies for election purposes, and that so far as alteration in their rates of wages, hours of duty, and conditions of service are concerned, they shall be dealt with through those Conciliation Boards as though they formed part of the staff of the company to which they were allocated, it being understood that in those cases where the joint staff are under the supervision of a joint officer all applications shall in the ordinary course be submitted to such joint officer.

In those cases where the joint staff are not under the control of a joint officer, it is understood that they should participate in any improved conditions which may be granted as the result of a petition dealing with the whole of the grade to which they belong throughout the company's line to which they are allocated.

In addition to the above alteration, it was agreed on behalf of the companies whose representatives were present at the conference, that extra and casual men employed in the manipulation of goods traffic shall be paid for the time actually worked at hourly rates on a basis not lower than the minimum rate of wages and hours of duty of the permanent men working in similar positions.

The representatives of the companies further undertook to use their good offices to get other companies to adopt the same arrangement.

(Signed) :—

(1) On behalf of the railway companies,

G. H. CLAUGHTON,
W. GUY GRANET,
SAM FAY,
H. A. WALKER.

(2) On behalf of the Joint Executive of the Trade Unions of Railway Employees :—

For the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants,

A. BELLAMY,
J. E. WILLIAMS,
J. H. THOMAS.

For the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen,

A. FOX.

For the General Railway Workers' Union,

T. LOWTH.

For the United Pointsmen's and Signalmen's Society,

S. CHORLTON.

(3) On behalf of the Government and the Board of Trade,

G. R. ASKWITH.

APPENDIX F.

Draft Conciliation Scheme, 1916

The following is the agreement as to questions affecting wages, hours, or conditions of service of railway employees engaged in the manipulation of traffic, submitted to the Special General Meeting of the N.U.R. on Thursday, March 30th, 1916:—

1.—The Conciliation Scheme agreed at the railway conference on December 11th, 1911, as now revised, and as set out in the first schedule to this agreement, is accepted and adopted by the parties hereto. This revised Conciliation Scheme shall come into operation on a date to be determined in the manner provided in the following agreed minute of meetings held between the parties hereto on October 1st, 7th, 11th, 12th and 13th, 1915, for the purpose of dealing with war bonus to railway employees:—

"This agreement shall remain in force until notice shall have been received by the railway companies from the Government determining the present control agreement, and thereafter shall be subject to determination on one month's notice on either side.

"Upon receipt by either party hereto from the other of notice to determine this agreement, the amended Conciliation Board scheme referred to in the minutes, including notes thereto, of meetings of the parties hereto on July 8th, 9th, 13th, 17th, and 22nd, 1914, shall come into operation.

"Any agreement as to rates of pay that may be come to as a result of the first settlement under the amended Conciliation Board scheme upon the determination of this agreement shall apply as from the date when this agreement is ended, it being understood that this provision as to the dating back of any such decisions under the amended scheme as to rates of pay shall not apply to questions of hours, payment for overtime or Sunday duty, or general conditions of service."

2.—All questions of discipline and management are to be excluded from the Conciliation Scheme as at present, but the railway companies will adopt as a part of their ordinary administration the suggestions contained in Clause 72 of the report of the Royal Commission appointed to investigate and report on the working of the Railway Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme of 1907, as under:—

"72.—Offences Against Discipline, etc.—Men charged with misconduct, neglect of duty, or other breaches of discipline should be permitted to state their defence, to call witnesses, and to advance any extenuating circumstances before their officers prior to a final decision being arrived at. Where doubts arise, or where serious results to men are likely to follow, the cases should, we think, be placed before the higher officials of the company. Appeals after punishment lead to a difficult position, and the necessity for them should be avoided."

It is further agreed by the railway companies that if after such investigation of a charge against an employee he is adjudged guilty, and is to be punished for the offence, he shall have the right of appeal to a superior officer for a reconsideration of his case, provided that such right of appeal shall not extend to cases of a trivial character. Any such appeal must be made in

writing. If the employee so desires, he may be heard in person, and, in that case, he may be accompanied at the interview with the superior officer by a spokesman, who may be either a fellow workman in his own grade or a headquarters official of a railwaymen's Trade Union.

3.—Wherever the expression "rates of wages" is used in the Conciliation Scheme, it shall be understood to mean remuneration either by time or on a piecework basis, but shall not mean remuneration by bonus, mileage, or other similar method of augmenting fixed time rates of wages.

A company may at any time introduce, modify, or withdraw any bonus, mileage, or other similar method by which employees may augment their earnings from time rates of wages or other fixed conditions of service. Provided that if during the currency of any such bonus, mileage, or other similar method, a company introduces changes in it which have the effect of depriving the employees of a reasonable opportunity of maintaining the former amount of augmented weekly earnings from such bonus, mileage, or other similar methods, apart from earnings from any other source, the men concerned may require the matter to be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Conciliation Scheme. If it is determined that such changes are not reasonable, the matter shall be adjusted from the date the changes were introduced.

4.—Any employee adversely affected by a decision of a company to withdraw or curtail either the supply of uniform clothing or the allowance of annual holidays with pay shall be entitled to have the matter dealt with under the Conciliation Scheme, but otherwise matters affecting the supply of uniform or the allowance of holidays shall not be dealt with by Conciliation Boards.

5.—The Conciliation Scheme shall continue to apply to "wage earning employees engaged in the manipulation of traffic," and this description shall be understood to mean the groups of trades shown hereunder, subject to the exclusion therefrom in all cases of clerks, men engaged mainly in supervisory duties, sworn police officers, hotel employees, seamen, dockmen, shopmen, and artisans.

The position of grades of employees not included in the following list, but already admitted by a company to the Conciliation Scheme, shall not be affected by this interpretation.

(1) Working foremen in any of the following groups, i.e., foremen actually performing the same class of manual work as the men under their control.

(2) Locomotive or mechanical engineering sections:—

(2) Locomotive or mechanical engineering sections:—
motormen attached to the locomotive, chief mechanical, or electrical engineer's department.

(b) Shedmen, coalmen, and others engaged in or about running sheds in connection with the equipment and preparation of locomotive engines for their daily work.

(c) Men engaged in connection with the maintenance of electric lighting, the operation of hydraulic, steam, electric, or other power hoists, pumps, or cranes other than men employed in or about power stations.

(3) Traffic section:—

(a) Men engaged in connection with signalling or protecting trains.

(b) Guards, shunters, and others engaged in connection with the movement of trains or rail vehicles.

(c) General porters, parcels porters, and other men engaged in the work of passenger stations.

(d) Men engaged in the general work of a goods station, i.e., handling, checking, weighing, recording, labelling, sheeting, or warehousing goods and merchandise or cattle traffic.

(e) Men engaged in the movement or care of horses, or of road vehicles of any description.

(4) Carriage and wagon section:—
Men employed in and about stations or traffic sidings in examining, oiling, or greasing carriages and wagons, or in cleaning, washing, lighting, or equipping rail or road vehicles.

(5) Way and works section:—

(a) Men engaged in the maintenance of the permanent way, fences, and station roads.

(b) Men engaged on ballast trains, or on relaying or slip and drainage work.

(c) Men engaged on the line in the maintenance and reconstruction of signalling, locking, and telegraph appliances.

THE REVISED SCHEME.

Revised scheme for dealing with questions affecting wages, hours, or conditions of service of railway employees engaged in the manipulation of traffic, to come into operation on a date to be specified:—

STEPS PRELIMINARY TO THE BRINGING OF BUSINESS BEFORE CONCILIATION BOARDS.

1.—Unless otherwise mutually arranged, the procedure laid down in paragraphs 2-8 shall be adopted.

2.—If the employees forming a grade or group of grades having a common interest wish to bring to the notice of the company a matter affecting their rates of wages, hours of labour, or conditions of service, or (at this stage) any questions affecting the contractual relations between the company and its employees, a petition may be presented signed by such a percentage of those concerned as the two sides of the Conciliation Board on the railway have already agreed, or may hereafter agree. In the absence of any such agreement the percentage of signatures shall be 25.

Signed petitions may be sent direct to the company by the petitioners, or may be presented by the secretary of the men's side of the Conciliation Board in which the grades concerned are included.

A general grade application as to any matter within the scheme may be presented to the company on behalf of the employees concerned by the secretary of the men's side of the Conciliation Board in which they are included. In such cases the men's secretary must prove to the company that the application has been approved by a majority of the men attending open meetings of the grades concerned at the various railway centres, and that such aggregate majority is not less than 25 per cent. of the total number of men employed by the company in each of the grades affected.

A petition or application shall name a suitable number of employees of the company whom the applicants desire to form a deputation. Should the applicants so wish, the deputation may be accompanied by the secretary of the men's side of the Conciliation Board in which the grades concerned are included. The company shall receive the deputation within 14 days from the receipt of the petition or application, and shall give a reply in writing within 28 days of the reception of the deputation.

3.—In the case of a matter which affects one or more individuals, as distinguished from a grade, or concerns one depot only, the application may be made in writing by those affected to the immediate superior of the men and

the company may designate a local superintending officer to hear the applicants. Should the applicants so wish, they may be accompanied at the interview by the secretary of the men's side of the Conciliation Board in which they are included. The company shall hear the applicants within 14 days of the receipt of the application, and shall give a reply in writing within 28 days of the conference with the applicants.

4.—In the event of the company's reply in either case not being acceptable, or of no reply being received within the stipulated period, it shall be open to the deputation to require any question relating to rates of wages, hours of labour, or conditions of service, other than matters of management or discipline, to be referred to the appropriate Conciliation Board by written application to the secretary of the employees' side of that Board.

5.—In the event of the company proposing to reduce the rates of wages or to increase the hours of labour, or otherwise alter adversely the conditions of service (other than matters of management or discipline) of a class of employees, the company shall circularise the men concerned, stating what their proposals are, and giving notice that the proposals will be placed on the agenda for the next appropriate meeting of the Conciliation Board. Such circular to be issued to the staff not less than one month before the date of the meeting of the Conciliation Board at which the proposal will be considered.

6.—If the company find it necessary to reduce the rates of wages or increase the hours of labour, or adversely alter the conditions of service of any individual or individuals, as distinct from a class of employees, they shall be at liberty to do so subject to the man or men concerned having the right (if he or they feel aggrieved) to refer the question, unless it is one relating to matters of management or discipline, to the next meeting of the Conciliation Board. If at the meeting of such Board it is determined that the alteration was not reasonable, the matter shall be adjusted as from the date the alteration was made.

Trip rates.—The companies are to retain the right to vary trip rates according to varying circumstances, but in case of the men not being satisfied as to the reasonableness of any such alteration of trip rates in a downward direction the matter may be referred in the ordinary course to the next meeting of the Conciliation Board, and if it is determined that such a reduction is not reasonable the matter shall be adjusted from the date of the alteration.

7.—For the purpose of the time-limits set out in the preceding rules the months of August and September shall not be counted.

8.—Petitions and deputations from the employees and proposals by the company shall, when practicable, be made at such dates as, failing agreements between the parties direct, will admit of the subjects of difference being placed on the agenda of the next ordinary meetings of the Conciliation Boards.

Establishment and Constitution of Conciliation Boards.

9.—There shall be established on each railway not more than four departmental Conciliation Boards to deal with questions referred to them relating to the rates of wages, hours of labour, or conditions of service, other than matters of management or discipline, of all wage-earning employees engaged in the manipulation of traffic and in the permanent service of the company.

Joint Staff.—Joint staff, where there is no separate Conciliation Board, shall be allocated to one or other of the owning companies for election purposes, and so far as alterations in their rates of wages, hours of duty, and conditions of service are concerned, they shall be dealt with through the Conciliation Boards as though they formed part of the staff of the company to which they are allocated. In those cases where the joint staff are under the supervision of a joint officer, all applications shall in the ordinary course be submitted to such joint officer. In those cases where the joint staff are not under the control of a joint officer they shall participate in any improved con-

ditions which may be granted as the result of a petition dealing with the whole of the grade to which they belong throughout the company's line to which they are allocated.

EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES.

10.—The various grades of the employees of the company who are covered by this scheme shall be placed in not more than four departmental sections, and the employees in each such departmental section shall be sub-divided into two or more groups of grades having a common interest.

Each group of grades within a departmental section shall be allotted a fixed number of representatives on the departmental board, to be determined by the proportion which the number of employees in such group bears to the total number of employees in the departmental section.

The area served by a company shall be divided, if necessary, for election purposes, into not more than four suitable districts. The division of a railway shall be made in such a manner that the aggregate number of employees in the several groups of grades in each district shall, as far as practicable, be equal, but in no case shall the employees in a group of grades at any one station or depot be divided and placed in separate electoral districts.

If on a railway which is divided into districts one representative only on a departmental board is allotted to a group of grades he shall be elected by the whole of the employees in such group of grades. If the fixed number of representatives allotted to a group of grades is more than one, but less or more than the number of districts, such representatives shall be allocated to the districts in ratio to the total number of employees in such group of grades in each district.

The representatives so elected by the several groups of grades within each departmental section shall form the employees' side of a departmental Conciliation Board to deal with matters coming within the scope of this scheme and affecting the employees included in such departmental section.

The following is given as an example only of the method of constituting four departmental Boards on a railway with twelve representatives of the employees on each Board. A company may adopt such variations of this model as may be necessitated by its particular system of departmental organisation, it being understood that in all cases electric train motormen are to be included in the locomotive department board.

Departmental Board.	Groups of Grades.	No. of men.	Allotted No. of representatives
1	(*a*) Engine drivers, firemen, and cleaners	6,400	7
	(*b*) Electric train motormen	800	1
	(*c*) Shedmen, electric light men, hydraulic men, etc.	1,900	2
	(*d*) Carriage and wagon examiners, washers, etc.	1,200	2
		10,300	12
2	(*a*) Signalmen, etc.	3,100	3
	(*b*) Guards and shunters, etc.	4,300	5
	(*c*) General porters, parcels staff, etc.	3,500	4
		10,900	12
3	(*a*) Goods shed and yard staff	4,500	7
	(*b*) Cartage staff	3,700	5
		8,200	12
4	(*a*) Platelayers	4,600	8
	(*b*) Ballastmen, etc.	2,000	3
	(*c*) Signal and telegraph linemen, etc.	500	1
		7,100	12

11.—The number of representatives of employees on each departmental Board on a railway shall, as far as possible, be the same as under the existing arrangements for sectional Boards under the Railway Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme of 1907, as amended by the Railway Conference Agreement of 11th December, 1911.

12.—All elections of representatives of the employees shall be held under the supervision of the Board of Trade, and the following rules shall apply:—

(*a*) Candidates must be employed in the district and group of grades for which they desire to stand.

(*b*) Nomination papers proposing candidates for the various Boards shall be sent to the Board of Trade not later than a specified day.

(*c*) Each nomination paper shall be signed by not less than 20 adult employees belonging to the district and group of grades in which the candidate is employed.

Note.—The Board of Trade have, in their discretion, in the case of small companies, modified the number of adult employees required to sign the nomination papers. This discretion to be continued.

(*d*) The Board of Trade, after satisfying themselves that the nomination papers are in order, shall prepare voting papers and arrange for them to be circulated among the adult employees on a given pay day.

(*e*) The Board of Trade shall receive and count the voting papers.

(*f*) For the purpose of these rules "adult" means a person of not less than 18 years of age.

Company's Representatives.

13.—The company shall furnish to the Board of Trade, not later than the date on which the men's voting papers are to be counted, a list for each Conciliation Board of the persons in the permanent employ of the company from among whom the company will select its representatives on the Conciliation Board. Such list must specify at least two persons who will have permanent seats on the company's side of the Board. The remaining seats on the company's side may be filled by any of the persons named in the company's panel of representatives for the Board in question, provided always that at no time shall the total number of representatives present on the company's side exceed the total membership of the employees' side of the Board. The words "in the permanent employ of the company" in line 3 of this paragraph shall be read as imposing no restriction on directors sitting upon the Boards.

Publication of the Names of Members.

14.—The Board of Trade shall publish for each Board, with as little delay as possible, the names of the members elected to represent the employees and the names of the person forming the company's panel of representatives specifying those of the latter who are to have permanent seats.

Term of Office.

15.—The term of office of the first Boards established under this scheme shall expire at the end of three years from the date on which it is determined the scheme shall come into operation. Each subsequent Board shall have a term of three years if the scheme continue in force for that period.

Casual Vacancies.

16.—Casual vacancies on the employees' side of a Conciliation Board through death, resignation, or loss of qualification shall be filled by co-optation by the remaining members of that side representing the group of grades in which the vacancy occurs, the co-opted member to be a permanent employee of the company in the district and group and grades represented by his predecessor. In cases in which a vacancy occurs through the death, resignation, or

loss of qualification of the only representative of a group of grades, such vacancy shall be filled by an election amongst those grades. Co-optation or election, as the case may be, shall also be employed in the case of vacancies caused by an insufficient number of candidates being properly nominated for election.

Vacancies on the company's side shall be filled by the company.

Modification of Departmental Sections and Number of Representatives.

17.—Any class of employees falling within the scope of this scheme, but not included at the outset in any Conciliation Board, may make application to the company, by means of a petition signed by at least 25 per cent. of their number, to be included in an existing Board. The company shall thereupon arrange to receive a deputation of the petitioners with a view to the decision of the matter, which, in the event of no agreement being arrived at, shall be referred to the assessors.

18.—Any class of employees wishing to be transferred from one group of grades to another group of grades within the same Departmental Board may make application to the company by petition signed by at least 25 per cent. of their number, and the petition shall be dealt with in the manner indicated in the preceding paragraph.

19. All differences with regard to the definition or modification of departmental sections, districts, or number of representatives of employees, which cannot be settled by agreement, shall be determined by the assessors.

OFFICERS OF BOARDS.

Assessors and Umpire.

20.—At the first meeting of a Conciliation Board on a railway each side shall appoint an assessor, who may be chosen from any source they please. Either side of a Board may at any time vary its appointed assessor. In the event of the employees' side of a Board being unable to agree upon the selection of its assessor, the question shall be referred to the Board of Trade, who will either decide the matter or take a ballot of the whole of the men employed in the grades represented by the Board.

If at a meeting of a Board the two sides are unable to arrive at a settlement, the two assessors shall meet as early as convenient to consider the matter of difference, and shall use their best endeavours to arrive at a mutual settlement. If the two assessors are unable to give an agreed decision, they may, if they so mutually determine, but not otherwise, obtain the assistance of an umpire, who shall be chosen by them by mutual agreement, or, that failing, shall be selected on their joint application by the Board of Trade from the panel of chairmen of Conciliation Boards.

The two assessors and the umpire shall have authority to give a final decision on any matters of difference referred to them. Whenever possible, such final decisions shall be arrived at by common agreement, but if no such agreement is obtainable a decision shall be given by the umpire.

Any decision arrived at shall be expressed in an award to be jointly prepared and signed either by the two assessors or by the two assessors and the umpire, as the case may be, and any such award shall be final and binding upon the company and the employees concerned.

Whenever a matter of difference is submitted to the two assessors, or to the two assessors and the umpire, they may have the assistance of the secretaries of the Board, and may call such relevant evidence in support of the claims put forward as they may deem necessary.

Either side of a Board may appoint an advocate (not being a counsel for the time being practising at the bar) to state its case to the assessors, or to the assessors and umpire.

Any differences arising under clauses 10, 17, 18, 19, 27, 31, 33, 37, or 54 of this scheme shall also be referred to the two assessors for decision.

Leading Members.

21.—Each side of a Conciliation Board shall select its own leading member from among the members of the side. The leading members of the two sides shall preside alternately at the meetings unless otherwise mutually arranged. In the event of the employees' side of a Conciliation Board being unable to agree upon the selection of its leading member, the question shall be referred to the Board of Trade, who will either decide the matter or take a ballot of the whole of the men employed in the grades represented by the Board.

22.—In case of emergency, and in the event of the secretary of a side not being available, the leading member of that side shall perform the duties of secretary.

Secretaries.

23.—Each side of a Conciliation Board shall have a secretary, who may take part in discussions and act as advocate, if desired, but shall have no vote unless he is a member of the Board.

24.—The company's secretary of each Conciliation Board shall be appointed by the company from any source it pleases.

25.—The employees' secretary shall be chosen by a majority of the employees' side of the Conciliation Board, who may select him from any source they please, and shall determine the length and conditions of his office, subject to the provisions of this scheme. In the event of the employees' side of a Conciliation Board being unable to agree upon the selection of its secretary the question shall be referred to the Board of Trade, who will either decide the matter or take a ballot of the whole of the men employed in the grades represented by the Board.

PROCEDURE.

Ordinary Meetings.

26.—Every Conciliation Board shall, if necessary, hold two ordinary meetings a year, at intervals of six months.

27.—The date of an ordinary meeting shall be fixed by the secretaries of the Board, or, failing agreement, by the assessors.

28.—At least 14 days' notice of the meeting shall be given by each secretary to the members of his own side.

29.—The agenda shall be agreed upon and signed by the secretaries of the two sides of the Board, and shall be issued 14 days before the meeting.

Special Meetings.

30.—Either side of a Conciliation Board may, by letter addressed to the secretary of the other side, ask for a special meeting to be held within 14 days, the request for a meeting to be accompanied by a statement of the matters to be placed on the agenda.

31.—Should a difference arise as to the date of the special meeting, or as to the necessity of holding it, the difference shall be referred by the two secretaries to the assessors within the 14 days mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The assessors shall then fix the date of the meeting, if any is to be held.

32.—No meeting shall be held in August or September, except by mutual consent.

Agenda.

33.—Any difference arising between the two secretaries as to the matters to be placed on the agenda shall be referred to the assessors for decision.

34.—No question not on the agenda shall be brought up at any meeting except with the consent of both sides.

Method of Dealing with Applications.

35.—No proposal for an alteration of rates of wages, hours of labour, or conditions of service, shall be entertained by a Conciliation Board until the proposal has been dealt with in the manner set out in paragraphs 1-8, and the company and the employees concerned have failed to come to agreement by direct negotiation.

36.—In the event of such failure to agree on a matter competent to be dealt with under this scheme, the matter may be placed on the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of the appropriate Conciliation Board by the side representing the party which made the proposal, and it shall be considered at such meeting unless previously withdrawn or placed on the agenda for a special meeting.

37.—In the event of the two sides failing to agree at the first meeting at which a matter is considered, it shall be open to either side to adjourn the meeting for 14 days. If no agreement is reached at the adjourned meeting, or if neither side asks for such adjourned meeting, the matter in difference shall be referred to the assessors.

Records of Proceedings.

38.—A record of every meeting of the Board shall be agreed upon and entered in duplicate minute books, one to be kept by each secretary, and signed by both. Each secretary shall circulate a copy of the record among those represented by his side of the Board, in such manner as may be determined by the side.

The record of meetings entered in the duplicate minute books shall be signed by the leading members of both sides as well as by the secretaries.

DECISIONS OF BOARDS.

Voting by Sides.

39.—Each side of a Conciliation Board shall vote separately, and the decisions of either side shall be arrived at by the majority of its members present. All decisions of a Board shall be arrived at by agreement between the two sides.

Decisions to be Final.

40.—All settlements arrived at, whether by agreement of the two sides or by the decision of the assessors or of the assessors and umpire, shall be final and binding, for their periods of operation, on both the company and the employees, the ratification of neither of these parties being required.

DURATION OF SETTLEMENTS.

Existing Settlements.

41.—All settlements arrived at between the company and deputations, or by Conciliation Boards, and which are in force when this revised scheme comes into operation, shall remain in force until they are varied, superseded, or nullified by agreement between the company and deputations of the employees, or by decisions of Conciliation Boards, or of the assessors, or the assessors and umpire under the present scheme.

Future Settlements Under the Present Scheme.

42.—Settlements arrived at by agreement between the company and a deputation of employees, by the two sides of a Conciliation Board, or by the decision of the assessors, or of the assessors and the umpire, shall have effect for at least two years.

43.—In either case settlements shall be held to continue in operation beyond the minimum period above specified until they are varied, superseded, or nullified by agreement between the company and a deputation of employees

or by decision of the Conciliation Board arrived at by agreement, or by decision of the assessors or of the assessors and the umpire.

44.—Settlements, whether by agreement or by decision of the assessors or of the assessors and the umpire, may be varied at any time (before or after the expiration of the minimum periods above mentioned) by mutual consent of the two sides of the Board.

Duration of the Scheme.

45.—This revised scheme shall remain in operation for not less than three years from the date it comes into force, and thereafter be subject to revision or determination, as regards any given company, by twelve months' notice given by the company, or by a majority of the aggregate representatives of employees on all the Conciliation Boards for the company's system. Any such notice that may be given shall not be effective until twelve months after the expiration of the said period of three years.

46.—All settlements in force at the period of determination of the scheme shall continue in operation for the period for which they were made, and thereafter until varied, superseded, or nullified by agreement between the company and the employees, or by such machinery for the settlement of differences as may be hereafter established.

Codification of Conditions of Employment.

47.—The lists showing the existing rates of wages, hours of labour, and other conditions of service of the various grades of employees covered by this scheme, printed and exhibited by the company, shall form the basis of the contract between the company and its employees, and copies thereof shall continue to be exhibited by the company in places where they may readily be consulted by the employees concerned, in order that every employee may know precisely what are the conditions of his service.

Expenses.

48.—Secretaries of Conciliation Boards shall be allowed free travelling on the company's system when engaged in the execution of their secretarial duties.

49.—All members of a Conciliation Board shall be allowed free travelling on the company's system for the purpose of attending meetings of a Board.

50.—A statement of the results of the election of employees' representatives to a Conciliation Board, the agenda papers, the records of proceedings, and the text of the agreements arrived at, having been prepared and signed by the two secretaries, shall be printed and posted up at the depots, stations, etc., in such a manner as to be accessible for examination by the employees of the company. Copies shall also be supplied to each member of the Board. All this shall be done at the company's expense.

INTERPRETATION.

Interpretation of Settlements.

51.—Any differences which may arise as to the interpretation of settlements, whether arrived at by agreement between the two sides of a Conciliation Board or by decision of the assessors or the assessors and umpire, shall in the first instance be considered by the two secretaries, and in case of difference be referred to the Board, which shall be summoned within 14 days.

52.—Requests by employees for interpretation by a Conciliation Board shall be made through the secretary of the employees' side, who shall decline them or bring them before the Board in accordance with general or special directions from the employees' side of the Board.

53.—Applications by the company for interpretation by a Conciliation Board shall be made through the secretary of the company's side of the Board.

54.—Any questions of interpretation, on which the Board fail to agree, shall be dealt with by the assessors.

Interpretation of Scheme.

55.—If any question should arise as to the interpretation of this scheme which cannot be mutually settled in any other way by the parties directly concerned, it shall be decided by the signatories to the agreement of which this scheme forms the first schedule.

56.—Requests for interpretation of the scheme shall be signed by both secretaries of the Board concerned. In the event of disagreement as to the form of application each secretary may submit an independent statement of the views of his side on the question in difference.

APPENDIX G.

Draft Conciliation Scheme, 1917

[As Drafted by the N.U.R. Executive.]

PROPOSED METHOD FOR NATIONAL NEGOTIATION BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ON RAILWAYS.

Should the employees of railway companies desire to present to their employers proposals affecting their wages, other method of remuneration or hours of labour, such proposals shall be submitted to the railway companies by the Executive Committee of the National Union of Railwaymen through the General Secretary.

In the event of the reply of the railway companies not being satisfactory, the Executive Committee of the National Union of Railwaymen shall appoint representatives who shall meet representatives of the railway companies and negotiate on such proposals.

REVISED SCHEME FOR DEALING WITH QUESTIONS AFFECTING THE WAGES, HOURS OF LABOUR, AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF ALL EMPLOYEES ON EACH RAILWAY OTHER THAN THOSE DEALT WITH BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYMEN.

1. Steps Preliminary to Bringing of Business before the Conciliation Board.—In the case of a matter which affects one or more individuals as distinguished from a grade the application shall be made in writing by those affected to their immediate superior officer.

In the case of a matter that concerns one depot only the application shall be made in writing by the secretary of the men's side of the Conciliation Board to the secretary of the company's side, and in either case the company may designate a local superintendent officer to hear the applicants. Should the applicants so wish they may be accompanied at the interview by the secretary of the men's side of the Conciliation Board.

The company shall hear the applicants within 14 days of the receipt of the application and shall give a reply in writing within 28 days of the conference with the applicants.

2. In the event of the company's reply in either case not being acceptable, or of no reply being received within the stipulated period, it shall be open to the applicants to require the question in dispute to be referred to the Conciliation Board by a written application to the secretary of the men's side of the Conciliation Board.

3. If the company find it necessary to reduce the wages or increase the hours of labour or adversely alter the conditions of service of any individual or individuals as distinct from a grade of employees they shall be at liberty to do so, subject to the man or men concerned having the right, if he or they feel aggrieved, to refer the question to the next meeting of the Conciliation Board.

If at the meeting of the Board it is determined that the alteration was not reasonable the matter shall be adjusted as from the date the alteration was made.

Trip Rates.—The companies are to retain the right to vary trip rates according to varying circumstances, providing in each case reasonable notice is given to the men affected. In case of men not being satisfied as to the reasonableness of any such alteration in a downward direction the matter may be referred in the ordinary course to the next meeting of the Conciliation Board. If it is determined at such meeting that the alterations were not reasonable the matter shall be adjusted as from the date of the alteration.

4. For the purpose of time limits, set out in the preceding rules, the months of August and September shall not be counted.

5. Applications from employees and proposals by the company shall, when practicable, be made at such dates as failing agreement by the parties direct will admit of the subjects of difference being placed on the agenda of the next ordinary meeting of the Conciliation Board.

6. Establishment and Constitution of Conciliation Boards.—There shall be established on each railway a Conciliation Board to deal with questions referred to it relating to wages, hours of labour, or other conditions of service of all employees desiring to come within the provisions of this scheme.

Joint Staff.—Joint staff, where there is no separate Conciliation Board, shall be allocated to one or other of the owning companies for election purposes, and so far as alterations in wages, hours of labour, or other conditions of service are concerned they shall be dealt with in the manner as set forth for the parent company.

In those cases where the joint staff are under the supervision of a joint officer application shall in the ordinary course be submitted to such officer.

In those cases where the joint staff are not under the control of the joint officer they shall participate in any improved conditions which may be granted as the result of an application dealing with the grade to which they belong throughout the company's line to which they are allocated.

7. The various grades of the employees of the company covered by this scheme shall be allotted a fixed number of representatives on the Board, to be determined by the proportion which the number of employees in each group bears to the total number of employees included in the Board.

The total number of representatives of the employees' side of the Board shall not exceed 20.

For the purpose of electing the employees' representatives the area covered by the company shall be taken as the electoral district.

The following is given as an example only of the method of constituting a Board on the railway with 20 representatives of the employees. A company may adopt such variations of this model as may be necessitated by its particular system of departmental organisation, it being understood that in all cases electric train motormen are to be included with the locomotive men:—

Groups of Grades.	No. of men.	No. of representatives.
(a) Engine drivers, firemen, cleaners, electric motor men	7,500	4
(b) Shedmen, electric-light men, hydraulic men, etc.	1,900	1
(c) Carriage and wagon examiners, washers, etc.	1,200	1
(d) Signalmen, etc.	3,100	2
(e) Guards, shunters, etc.	4,300	2
(f) General porters, parcels staff, etc.	3,500	2
(g) Goods shed and yard staff	4,500	2
(h) Cartage staff	3,700	2
(i) Platelayers	4,600	2
(j) Ballastmen, etc.	2,000	1
(k) Signal and telegraph linemen, etc.	500	1

8. All elections of representatives of the employees shall be held under the supervision of the Board of Trade, and the following rules shall apply:—

(a) Candidates must be employed in the group of grades for which they desire to stand.

(b) Nomination papers proposing candidates for the Board shall be sent to the Board of Trade not later than a specified day.

(c) Each nomination paper shall be signed by not less than 20 adult employees belonging to the group of grades in which the candidate is employed.

Note.—The Board of Trade may, in their discretion, in the case of small companies, modify the number of adult employees required to sign the nomination papers.

(d) The Board of Trade, after satisfying themselves that the nomination papers are in order, shall prepare voting papers and arrange for them to be circulated among the adult employees on a given pay day.

(e) The Board of Trade shall receive and count the voting papers.

(f) For the purpose of these rules "adult" means a person of not less than 18 year's of age.

9. Company's Representatives.—The company shall forward to the Board of Trade, not later than the date on which the men's voting papers have to be counted, a list of the persons in the permanent employ of the company from whom the company will select its representatives on the Conciliation Board. Such list must specify at least two persons who will have permanent seats on the company's side of the Board. The remaining seats on the company's side may be filled by any of the persons named in the panel of the company's representatives, provided always that at no time shall the total number of representatives present on the company's side exceed the total membership of the employees' side of the Board. The words "in the permanent employ of the company" in line 3 of this paragraph shall be read as imposing no restriction on directors sitting on the Board.

10. Publication of Names of Members.—The Board of Trade shall publish with as little delay as possible the names of the members elected to represent the employees and the names of the persons forming the panel of company's representatives, specifying those of the latter who are to have permanent seats.

11. Term of Office.—The term of office of the first Board established under this scheme shall expire at the end of three years from the date on which it is determined the scheme shall come into operation. Each subsequent Board shall have a term of three years if the scheme continues in force for that period.

12. Casual vacancies.—Casual vacancies on the employees' side of the Conciliation Board, through death, resignation, or loss of qualification, shall be filled by co-optation by the remaining members of that side, the co-opted member to be a permanent employee of the company in the group of grades represented by his predecessor.

Vacancies on the company's side shall be filled by the company.

13. Transfer of Grades.—Any class of employees wishing to be transferred from one group of grades to another group of grades within the Board shall make application to the secretary of the employees' side of the Board, who shall immediately arrange with the secretary of the company's side of the Board for the application to be discussed at the next meeting of the Board.

Prior to the establishment of the Boards all differences with regard to the grouping of grades, the number of representatives of the employees, which cannot be settled by agreement, shall be determined by the signatories to the scheme. Differences on these matters after the establishment of the Boards shall, failing agreement, be determined by the assessors.

14. Assessors.—At the first meeting of the Conciliation Board, each side shall appoint an assessor who may be chosen from any source they please. Either side of the Board may at any time vary its appointed assessor. In the event of the employees' side of the Board being unable to agree upon the selection of its assessor the question shall be referred to the Board of Trade, who will either decide the matter or take a ballot of the whole of the men employed in the grades represented by the Board.

If at a meeting of the Board the two sides are unable to arrive at a settlement, the two assessors shall meet as early as convenient to consider the matter of difference, and shall use their best endeavours to arrive at a mutual settlement.

The two assessors shall have authority to give a final decision on any matters of differences referred to them. Whenever possible such final decision shall be arrived at by common agreement.

Any decision arrived at shall be expressed in an award to be jointly prepared and signed by the two assessors, and any such award shall be final and binding upon the company and employees concerned.

Whenever a matter of difference is submitted to the two assessors they may have the assistance of the secretaries of the Board, and may call such evidence in support of the claims put forward as they may deem necessary.

Either side of a Board may appoint an advocate (not being a counsel for the time being practising at the Bar) to state its case to the assessors.

Any differences arising under clauses of this scheme shall also be referred to the two assessors for decision.

15. Leading Member.—Each side of the Board shall select its own leading member from among the members of the respective sides. The leading members of each side shall preside alternately at the meetings, unless otherwise mutually arranged. In the event of the employees' side of the Board being unable to agree upon the selection of its leading member the question shall be referred to the Board of Trade, who will either decide the matter or take a ballot of the whole of the men employed in the grades represented by the Board.

16. In the case of emergency, and in the event of the secretary of a side not being available, the leading member of that side shall perform the duties of secretary.

17. Secretaries.—Each side of the Board shall have a secretary who may take part in discussions and act as advocate, if desired, but shall have no vote unless he is a member of the Board.

18. The company's secretary of the Board shall be appointed by the company from any source it pleases.

19. The employees' secretary shall be chosen by a majority of the employees' side of the Board, who may select him from any source they please, and shall determine the length and conditions of his office, subject to the provisions of this scheme. In the event of the employees' side of the Conciliation Board being unable to agree upon the selection of its secretary, the question shall be referred to the Board of Trade, who will either decide the matter or take a ballot of the whole of the men employed in the grades represented by the Board.

20. Procedure—Ordinary Meetings.—The Conciliation Board shall, if necessary, hold two ordinary meetings a year at intervals of six months.

21. The date of an ordinary meeting shall be fixed by the secretaries of the Board or, failing agreement, by the assessors.

22. At least 14 days' notice of the meeting shall be given by each secretary to the members of his own side.

23. The agenda shall be agreed upon and signed by the secretaries of the two sides of the Board, and shall be issued 14 days before the meeting.

24. Special Meetings.—Each side of the Conciliation Board may, by letter addressed to the secretary of the other side ask for a special meeting to be held within 14 days, the request for a meeting to be accompanied by a statement of the matters to be placed on the agenda.

25. Should a difference arise as to the date of the special meetings, or as to the necessity of holding it, the difference shall be referred by the two secretaries to the assessors within the 14 days mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The assessors shall then fix the date of the meeting, if any is to be held.

26. No meetings shall be held in August or September, except by mutual consent.

27. Agenda.—Any difference arising between the two secretaries as to the matters to be placed on the agenda shall be referred to the assessors for decision.

28. No question not on the agenda shall be brought up at any meeting except with the consent of both sides.

29. Methods of Dealing with Applications.—No proposals for an alteration of wages, hours of labour, or other conditions of service shall be entertained by the Board until the proposal has been dealt with in the manner set out in paragraphs 1 to 5 and the company and the employees concerned have failed to come to an agreement by direct negotiation.

30. In the event of such failure to agree on a matter competent to be dealt with under this scheme the matter may be placed on the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of the Conciliation Board by the side representing the party which made the proposals, and it shall be considered at such meeting unless previously withdrawn or placed on the agenda for a special meeting.

31. In the event of the two sides failing to agree at the first meeting at which a matter is considered it shall be open to either side to adjourn the meeting for 14 days. If no agreement is reached at the adjourned meeting or if neither side ask for such adjourned meeting the matter of difference shall be referred to the assessors.

32. Records of Proceedings.—A record of every meeting of the Board shall be agreed upon and entered in the duplicate minute books, one to be kept by each secretary, and signed by both. Each secretary shall circulate a copy of the record among those represented by his side of the Board in such manner as may be determined by the side.

The record of the meetings entered in the duplicate minute books shall be signed by the leading members of both sides as well as by the secretaries.

33. Decisions of Board.—Voting by Sides.—Each side of the Conciliation Board shall vote separately, and the decisions of either side shall be arrived at by the majority of its members present. All decisions of the Board shall be arrived at by agreement between the two sides.

34. Decisions to be Final.—All settlements arrived at, whether by agreement of the two sides or by the decision of the assessors, shall be final and binding for the periods of operation on both the company and the employees, the ratification of neither of these parties being required.

35. Duration of Settlements.—Existing Settlements.—All settlements arrived at between the company and deputations or by Conciliation Board, and which are in force when this revised scheme comes into operation, shall remain in force until they are varied, superseded, or nullified by agreement

between the company and the deputations of the employees or by the decision of the Conciliation Board.

36. Future Settlements under the Present Scheme.—Settlements arrived at by agreement between the company and a deputation of employees, by the two sides of the Conciliation Board, or by the decision of the assessors shall have effect for at least two years.

37. In either case settlements shall be held to continue in operation beyond the minimum period above specified until they are varied, superseded, or nullified by agreement between the company and a deputation of the employees, or by decision of the Conciliation Board arrived at by agreement, or by decision of the assessors.

38. Settlements, whether by agreement or by decision of the assessors, may be varied at any time (before or after the expiration of the minimum period above mentioned) by mutual consent of the two sides of the Board.

39. Duration of the Scheme.—This revised scheme shall remain in operation for not less than two years from the date it comes into force, and thereafter be subjected to revision or determination as regards any given company by twelve months' notice given by the company, or by a majority of the aggregate representatives of employees on the Conciliation Board for the company's system. Any such notice that may be given shall not be effective until twelve months after the expiration of the said period of two years.

40. All settlements in force at the period of determination of the scheme shall continue in operation for the period for which they were made, and thereafter until varied, superseded, or nullified by agreement between the company and the employees or by such machinery for the settlement of differences as may be hereafter established.

41. Codification of Conditions of Employment.—The lists showing the existing wages, hours of labour, and other conditions of service of the various grades of employees covered by this scheme, printed and exhibited by the company, shall form the basis of the contract between the company and its employees, and copies thereof shall continue to be exhibited by the company in places where they may readily be consulted by the employees concerned in order that every employee may know precisely what are the conditions of his service.

42. Expenses.—The secretary of the men's side of the Conciliation Board shall be allowed free travelling on the company's system when engaged in the execution of his secretarial duties.

43. All members of the Conciliation Board shall be allowed free travelling on the company's system for the purpose of attending meetings of the Board.

44. A statement of the result of the election of employees' representatives to the Conciliation Board, the agenda papers, the records of proceedings, and the text of the agreements arrived at having been prepared and signed by the two secretaries, shall be printed and posted up at the depots, stations, etc., in such a manner as to be accessible for examination by the employees of the company. Copies shall also be supplied to each member of the Board. All this shall be done at the company's expense.

45. Interpretation.—Interpretation of settlements.—Any differences which may arise as to the interpretation of settlements arrived at by agreement between the two sides of the Conciliation Board, or by decision of the assessors, shall, in the first instance, be considered by the two secretaries, and in the case of difference be referred to the Board, which shall be summoned within 14 days.

46. Requests by employees for interpretation by the Conciliation Board shall be made through the secretary of the employees' side, who shall decline

them or bring them before the Board in accordance with general or special direction from the employees' side of the Board.

47. Applications by the company for interpretation by the Conciliation Board shall be made through the secretary of the company's side of the board.

48. Any question of interpretation on which the board fail to agree shall be dealt with by the assessors.

49. Interpretation of the Scheme.—If any question should arise as to the interpretation of this scheme which cannot be mutually settled in any other way by the parties directly concerned it shall be decided by the signatories to the agreement, of which this scheme forms the first schedule.

50. Requests for interpretation of the scheme shall be signed by both secretaries of the board. In the event of disagreement as to the form of application each secretary may submit an independent statement of the views of his side on the question in difference.

PROPOSALS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SHOP COMMITTEES ON THE VARIOUS RAILWAYS.

1. Objects.—To provide conciliation machinery for the purpose of settling differences as to rates of wages (time and piece), hours of labour, and general conditions of labour between the railway companies and their employees at the several engineering, carriage, wagon repairing, and other shops (where the employees are not embraced in the general conciliation scheme), by means of local committees and a central committee on each railway.

Local Shops Committees.

2. Composition.—At each large shop centre there shall be formed a local shops committee. That committee shall be composed of representatives elected on departmental lines according to varying local circumstances; the number on each committee shall not exceed twelve. Each employee shall have a vote.

3. Complaints.—Any employee or employees having a complaint which is not rectified by the local foreman or manager may submit it to the local shop committee, who shall negotiate with the shop manager or engineer, as the case may be, with a view of such complaint being remedied.

4. Nomination.—Each local committee shall have power to nominate a member for the central committee, and, if necessary, the names shall be submitted to a ballot.

Central Shops Committees.

5. Composition.—There shall be a central committee for each railway. Representation on the central committee shall be determined by local committees. As far as practicable representation shall be given to each centre in proportion to the number employed.

6. The number of members on each central committee shall be determined by the numbers employed on each company, but in no case shall exceed eight, and shall, as far as possible, be representative of each section of the men.

7. Companies Representatives.—The companies shall appoint their representatives on the central committee. The number shall not exceed that of the employees' side.

8. Local Differences.—The central committee shall have power to deal with matters referred from the local committees. It shall use its utmost endeavour to arrive at a settlement of the questions in dispute, and any agreement arrived at by both sides of the committee shall be binding upon all concerned.

9. General Applications.—Applications from either side which involve

an alteration in the general list (time or piece), hours of labour, or conditions of employment shall be admitted to, and dealt with, by the central committee.

10. Meetings.—The central committee shall meet on the request of either side. The meetings shall be held within 14 days from the date of such requisition.

11. Agenda.—Notice of any question, which it is desired by either side to discuss, shall be forwarded to the secretaries, and the agenda shall be circulated as early as possible before each meeting.

12. Vacancies.—Casual vacancies amongst the representatives on the men's side of the local or central committees to be filled up by the remaining representatives on the committees from the same shop or section as the man whose place has become vacant.

13. Term of Office.—Representatives on the central and local committees to hold office for three years, and shall be eligible for re-election.

14. Secretaries.—Each side of the general committee to appoint its own secretary, who may, or may not, be a person in the service of the company, and who shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the committee and take part in the proceedings.

15. Duration of Committees.—This scheme to remain in operation until six months after notice has been given by one side or the other of the central committee to terminate it.

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